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VOICES OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

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(VOICE OF SECULAR AND CONSTRUCTIVE NATIONALISM)

Congress Speaks 1923—1946

VOLUME IX

(Book 1)

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PREFACE

The story of Indian freedom movement is a splendid record of ceaseless growth and development of national consciousness from one stage to another, each successive stage having its own distinctive features. It illustrates the fact of different trends prevailing at different times but all having a sort of fundamental unity at the base. The 'moderates' of the early phase of the twentieth century adopted a line different from that of the 'trend-setters' of the later part of the nineteenth century. The 'extremists' then chalked out a different course that looked like a clear departure from the line set by the founding fathers of the freedom struggle and, for this reason, their utterances and actions were looked at with ample apprehension not only by the British rulers but also by the leading lights of the 'moderate school'. With the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene, a fundamental change in the course of our freedom struggle occurred and his call for 'non-cooperation' paved the way for India's demand for complete independence.

A proper study of India's freedom movement covers all what prominent Indian figures thought and did for the great cause; it also covers important reactions, interpretations and pronouncements of the British leaders and observers. That is, India's freedom movement is inextricably related to her constitutional development. The British rulers sought to make laws, one after another, so as to change their system of administration with the growth of Indian nationalist movement. In other words, they sought to adjust their colonial system with the growing demands of Indian nationalism as far possible. While the Government of India Act of 1858 replaced the rule of the Company by the rule of the Crown, the Indian Councils Act of 1861 inaugurated the 'policy of association'. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 came as an improvement upon the Act of 1861. Then, the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) came as an improvement upon the previous Act. It also came as a gift of the policy of conciliation and counterpoise of the natives against the natives. And

then came the Government of India Act of 1919 to reward the Indians diplomatically for their services rendered during the first World War. It was another constitutional device to cheat the Indian people in the name of giving them responsible government in doses. As such, it failed to placate the Indian political opinion. Finally came the Act of 1935 that had the same fate. Representing the real will of the people, Jawaharlal Nehru called it 'a charter of bondage and slavery.' After the second Worid War, the British rulers converted their policy of 'divide and rule' into the strategy of 'divide and quit' and it had its fulfilment in the Indian Independence Act, 1947.

As such, I have put the matter in two parts. While Part I contains addresses delivered by the Presidents on the occasion of the annual meets of the Indian National Congress. Part II has important readings related to India's constitutional development. The noteworthy point is that our national leaders spoke in different 'voices' and so I have sought to include their views in different volumes with a view to maintain, as far as possible, the unity of a particular trend. In this volume I have included Presidential addresses of the period of the first World War and immediately thereafter marked by astonishing progress in the sphere of Congress-League rapprochement signifying Hindu-Muslim unity and the emergence of Gandhian leadership that signified a unique blending of the trends of moderatism and extremism. I hope that my scheme would rereive the appreciation of readers who would find here much for the purpose of their advanced study or research in this important field of modern Indian history and politics.

I have drawn material from numerous published sources, Indian and foreign, according to my own scheme and I offer my sincere gratitude to all of them. I am thankful to a large number of my friends for the help they extended to me for the completion of this project. I am thankful to Seema Saxena and Seema Johari who helped me in the collection and arrangement of the matter and checking of proofs. In particular, I am grateful to my Publishers who appreciated this project and took pains to bring out this volume in a record time.

—J. C. Johari

INTRODUCTION

A study of the addresses delivered by the Presidents of the Indian National Congress on the occasion of the annual meets during the Gandhian era shows a distinct break from the past. The old trend of admiring the British Raj and aspiring for India's independence within the Empire became more feeble and had its final termination in 1929 when the Lahore Congress reiterated the goal of *purna swaraj* (complete independence) adopted two years ago.[1] The case of Dominion Status for India witnessed its last affirmation in the address of Pandit Motilal Nehru delivered at the Calcutta Congress (1928). The wave of Gandhi's mass movement overshadowed the path of constitutionalism. The Simon Commission saw is nation-wide boycott in 1928 and the three Round Table Conferences of 1930, 1931 and 1932 failed to yield dividends. The provisions of the White Paper of 1933 and of the Act of 1935, that was based upon them, were widely condemned. For certain tactical reasons the Congress decided to contest elections under the Act of 1935. The working of the Congress ministries in 8 out of 11 provinces (1937-39) showed that in the face of numerous hurdles created by an arrogant and a hostile bureaucracy, the Congress leaders could make a good experiment with the working of parliamentary democracy. Finally, the success of the Quit India movement (1942-44) demonstrated that the progress of the freedom struggle could not be checked by any measure of repressive policy. It forced the British rulers to convert their policy of 'divide and rule' into the strategy of 'divide and quit'. India saw her liberation in 1947; she also saw her unfortunate division in the creation of Pakistan.

While the Montagu Declaration of 20 August, 1917 was

1. In one of the resolutions adopted by the Madras Congress (1927) it was given that it "declares the goal of the Indian people to complete national independence."

CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES

Sessions	*Dates*	*Venues*	*Presidents*	*Chairmen (Reception) Committee*	*No. of delegates*
Special	15.9.1923	Delhi	Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	——	—
Thirty-eighth	28.12.1923	Cocanada	Maulana Mohammed Ali	Konda Ventatappayya	1,661
Thirty-ninth	26.12.1924	Belgaum	Mahatma Gandhi	G. R. Balkrishna Deshpande	1,844
Fortieth	26 12.1925	Kanpur	Mrs. Sarojini Naidu	Murari Lal	2,688
Forty-first	26.12.1926	Gauhati	Srinivas Iyengar	T. R. Phookun	—
Forty-second	26.12.1927	Madras	Dr. M. A. Ansari	C. N. M. Mudaliar	2,711
Forty-third	29.12.1928	Calcutta	Pandit Motilal Nehru	J. M. Sen-Gupta	5,221
Forty-fourth	29 12.1929	Lahore	Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	Dr. S. U. Kitchlew	—
Forty-fifth	29.12.1931	Karachi	Vallabhbhai Patel	Choitram P. Gidwani	—
Forty-sixth*	24.4.1932	Delhi	Ranchhoddas Amritlal	——	—
Forty-seventh*	1.4.1933	Calcutta	Mrs. Nellie Sen-Gupta**	——	—
Forty-eighth	26.12.1934	Bombay	Rajendra Prasad	K. F. Nariman	—
Forty-ninth	12.4 1936	Lucknow	Jawaharlal Nehru	Sri Prakash	—
Fiftieth	27.12.1936	Faizpur	Jawaharlal Nehru	——	—
Fifty-first	19.2.1938	Haripura	Subhas Chandra Bose	Darbar Gopaldas Desai	—
Fifty-second	10.3.1939	Tripuri	Subhas Chandra Bose	Seth Govind Das	—
Fifty-third	19.3.1940	Ramgarh	Maulana A. K. Azad	Rajendra Prasad	—
Fifty-fourth	21.11.1946	Meerut	Acharya J. B. Kripalani	Raghubir Narain Singh	--

* During 1932-1933 Indian National Congress was a banned organisation.

** She presided over the deliberations as M. M. Malaviya was under detention.

widely hailed, the provisions of the Montford Constitution (Act of 1919) shattered the hopes of the Indian leaders. Whether the Indian leaders should give cooperation to the British rulers or not, now stood as the principal issue. While Gandhiji and his trusted lieutenants adhered to follow the way of complete non-cooperation to win swaraj, others preferred to follow the course of 'responsive cooperation'.[2] It signified that the lines of the 'moderates' and even of those who had differences with Gandhiji (like C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru) desired contingent cooperation. But this line failed to prevail and the leaders of the swaraj party followed the line of 'obstruction' and 'sabotage' by entering the Legislative Councils and wrecking the Reforms from within. It had a short tenure and after the death of C.R. Das in 1925, and more particularly after the massive defeat of the Swaraj Party in the elections of 1926, the way of non-cooperation dominated the scene. Thus, Dr. M. A. Ansari in his address at the Madras Congress (1927) said : "The problem then is how to free India. For over a generation the leaders of the Indian public opinion in the country advocated and practised a policy of complete cooperation with the government. That policy was doomed to failure from its very inception. Cooperation is possible between groups with common ideals. Where objects pursued are diametrically opposed, there can be no cooperation. Cooperation in such circumstances can only mean surrender of the most cherished ideals on the part of the weak to the wishes of the strong" While defending the line of non-cooperation, he said : "Non-cooperation did not fail us, we failed the non-cooperation."

It was in this context that the Madras Congress took a resolve to boycott the Statutory (Simon) Commission and Motilal Nehru in his address at the Calcutta Congress (1928) said : "The solemn promises of responsible government have found fulfilment in that colossal fraud, which is now careering along our streets leaving bleeding heads and broken bones behind." And yet, as a follower of the pre-War liberal tradi-

2. Tilak is regarded as the originator of this idea which meant cooperation to the British government where possible, and opposition where necessary. D.P. Karmarkar: *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: A Study*, p. 280.

tion, he appreciated the case of India's swaraj within the Empire. Already in the Nehru Report the case of Dominion Status for India was proposed.[8] So in his address, he went on to say : "The All-Parties Committee has recommended dominion status. I have explained my position more than once, but with your permission I shall restate here as clearly as I can. To put it in a nutshell, it comes to this : I am for complete independence—as complete as it can be—but I am not against full Dominion Status—as full as any Dominion possesses it today—provided I got before it loses all attraction. I am for severance of British connection as it subsists with us today, but am not against it as it exists with the Dominions."

However, it was the last faint expression in favour of India's independence within the Empire. The son (Jawaharlal Nehru) made a distinct and final improvement upon what his father (Motilal Nehru) had uttered just a year back. In very unambiguous terms Jawaharlal reiterated the thesis of non-cooperation when he said at the Lahore Congress (1929) : "What will the Congress do? The conditions for cooperation remain unfulfilled. Can we cooperate so long as there is no guarantee that real freedom will come to us? Can we cooperate when our comrades lie in prison and repression is continued? Can we cooperate until we are assured that real peace is sought after, and not merely a tactical advantage over us. Peace can not come at the point of the bayonet, and if we are to continue to be dominated over by an alien people, let us at least be no consenting parties to it. We stand, therefore, today for the fullest freedom of India. "Reiterating the same view, Sardar Vallabhbahai Patel in his address at the Karachi Congress (1931) said : "There is no receding from the Lahore resolution of complete independence. This independence does

The Nehru Report was the model of India's future constitution It was prepared by a committee having representatives of all major parties and sections of the Indian people. Its chairman was Pandit Motilal Nehru. The personnel and terms of reference of this committee approved at the All-Parties conference held in Delhi in February, 1928.

not mean, was not intended to mean, a churlish refusal to associate with Britain or any other power. Independence, therefore, does not preclude the possibility of equal partnership for mutual benefit and dissolvable at the will of either party. If India is to reach her independence through consultation and agreement, it is reasonable to suppose that there will be British association."

It is obvious that with the emergence of Jawaharlal Nehru on the scene, the case of India's independence within the Empire or of any association with the British on unequal or dishonourable terms had its rejection for ever. The argument of Gandhi that 'India would win swaraj within the Empire if possible' lost its relevance, but this part of his argument that 'India would win swaraj without the Empire if necessary' became the finally accepted creed of the Congress. However, another important feature of the changed creed of the Congress should be seen in its frank assertion of socialist and anti-feudal orientations. Jawaharlal Nehru aligned the meaning of swaraj with the idea of socialism that implied end of external colonialism as well as of internal feudalism. As in his address at the Lahore Congress, he said : "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy. . .For India means the peasantry and labour, and to the extent we raise them and satisfy their wants, will we succeed in our task. And the measure of the strength of our national movement will be the measure of their adherence to it." In his address at the Faizpur Congress (1936), he made it above board that socialism "would come only after independence and, as such, the aim of the Congress was to win independence first." As he said : "The Congress stands today for full democracy in India and fights for a democratic state, not for socialism. It is anti-imperialist and strives for greater changes in our political and economic structure. I hope that the logic of events will lead it to socialism, for that seems to me the only remedy for India's ills."

The Congress leaders rejected the Act of 1935 without any reservation on their part.[4] And yet the 'right wing' of the Congress desired to fight elections so as to show popularity of the organisation in the country. In a sense it indicated a sort of cooperation with the British rule. The left-wing leaders of the Congress abhorred this idea and they preferred the course of complete non-cooperation. But Jawaharlal Nehru could make an intelligent way out when, keeping in view the consequences of not fighting elections under the Act of 1935, he said these words in his address at the Faizpur Congress (1936): "There seems to be a fear that if we donot accept office, others will do so, and they will put obstacles in the way of our freedom movement. But tf we are in a majority we can prevent others from misbehaving, we can even prevent the formation of any ministry." While rejecting the line of the swarajists, on this occasion he went on to say : "The constitution cannot be wrecked by action inside the legislative assembly only. For that mass action outside is necessary, and that is why we must

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4 When the terms of White Paper of 1933 became public, it was strongly criticised by the Indian leaders. In his address written for the Calcutta Congress (that remained undelivered), Pandit Madan Malaviya said "England has gone on preparing a constitution for the future government of India with the help of some Indians of its own selection and liking. It has framed the constitution under the claim that it is the right and moral obligation of the British Parliament to determine to what extent and with what limitations and safeguards it will allow India to administer its own affairs. The White Paper is an ugly revelation of the attitude of British statesmen who dominate the English Parliament today towards India and her problems. It constitutes a deliberate affront to the patriotism and intelligenee of India. Indeed, it proposes to make the position of the Indians worse than it is today." After tbe ban was lifted, the Congress had an open session at Bombay in 1934 under the presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. In his address he referred to the objectionable provisions of the White Paper. He termed it 'highly disappointing and unsatisfactory'. In a very critical tone he said : "And, of course, it does not in any way fulfil the requirements of the Congress, which has declared for independence, meaning and including complete control over the army, the finances, the foreign relations and international administration of the country. The White Paper is nothing if it is not a negation of all these items and if it does not bar even a gradual progress towards any of them."

always remember that the essence of our freedom struggle lies in the mass organisation and mass action." In this way, he supported the idea of fighting elections under the Act of 1935 both for the sake of demonstrating to the rulers the popularity of the Congress in the country and to offset the possibility of any other party (ostensibly Muslim League) taking the advantage of the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the Congress. He had to take recourse to this judicious strategy in spite of the fact that he had condemned the Act of 1935 as the 'charter of bondage and slavery'. He reiterated the view that "a constituent assembly is the only proper and democratic method for the framing of our constitution and for its delegates than to negotiate a treaty with the representatives of the British government."

Though Nehru espoused the cause of socialism, he did not patronise the Congress Socialist Party,[5] nor did he endorse the thesis of a 'united front' advanced by the communists and the socialists alike so as to overthrow the alien rule. His argument was that the Congress itself was an organisation of this sort and, as such, its affiliation with other leftist organisations would not serve the desired purpose. As he said in his address at the Lucknow Congress (1936) : "The Congress has been in the past a broad front representing various opinions joined together by that common bond. It must continue as such even though the difference of those opinions becomes more marked."

Moreover, like Prof. H.J. Laski, Nehru looked at fascism as the last remedy to save the tottering capitalist system and thus he accused the Indian capitalists not only of exploiting and oppressing the working class but also for working as an ally of Western imperialism. As he said in his address at the

5. It was a small party of some Congressmen having a socialist orientation like Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Minoo Masani, Dantwala, Yusuf Mehrally etc. For some time Dr. Sampurnanand was also associated with it. It was formed in the Nasik jail in 1934 and it operated as a pressure group within the Indian National Congress. These leaders took inspiration from socialist orientations of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose and represented the left-wing of the Congress.

Lucknow Congress (1936): "Capitalism in its difficulties took to fascism with all its brutal suppression of what Western civilisation had apparently stood for: it became even in some of its homelands, what its imperialist counterpart had long been in the subject colonial countries. Fascism and imperialism thus stood as the two faces of the now decaying capitalism and though they varied in different countries according to national characteristics and political conditions, they represented the same process of reaction and supported each other and at the same time came into conflict with each other, for such a conflict was inherent in their very nature."

Subhas Chandra Bose was a leftist by conviction and, for this reason, he was very close to Jawaharlal Nehru. But in the late 1930s he became an admirer of the ways of the dictatorial powers and that became the cause of his sharp differences with Gandhi, Nehru and other leaders of the Congress. His advocacy of revolutionary means militated against the commitment of the Congress to the use of the techniques of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. In his address at the Haripura Congress (1938), he advised the Congressmen to understand the reality of the situation and change its role by taking to other possible means. Though the Congress ever lived like a composite organisation. he desired to make the line between its right and left wings clear. In his address he went to the length of saying : "I would appeal specially to the leftist groups in the country to pool all their strength and resources for democratising the Congress and reorganising it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. In the making of this appeal I am greatly encouraged by the attitude of the leaders of the British Communist Party whose general policy with regard to India seems to me to be in the keeping with that of the Indian National Congress."

Smarting under the shadow of the conditions in which he won presidential election for the second time in the face of stiff opposition of Gandhi, Nehru and others, he in a more vigorous tone asserted his thesis at the Tripuri Congress (1939). On this occasion he expressed his regret over the prevailing situation in the ranks of the Congress in these

words : "It grieves me to find that there are people in the Congress who are pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for major assault on British imperialism. But looking at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner, I do not see the slightest ground of pessimism. Thus, he advised the Congress for making a final advance in the direction of gaining swaraj by all possible means."

The Congress always stood for the cause of secular and constructive nationalism. It could be taken as its support for the ideal of composite nationalism. For this reason, it always aspired for real Hindu-Muslim unity. It was for this very sake that the Congress leaders accepted the terms of the Lucknow Pact of 1916 and thereby invited the charge of adopting an attitude of appeasement towards the Muslim League—a body of Muslim communalists. The way Gandhiji defended the cause of the Khilafat deeply influenced the Muslims. Quite a large number of Muslims became his followers and they discarded and refuted the gospel of isolationism as preached by Syed Ahmed Khan and his loyal disciples of the Aligarh School. While grasping the reality of the prevaling situation, in his address at the Cocanada Congress (1923), Maulana Mohammed Ali said : "The problem today, the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, is not precisely the same as it was in the pre-Gandhi days." In his address at the Ramgarh Congress (1940), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad emphatically stressed the point : "It was India's historic destiny that many human races and cultures and religions should flow to her, finding a home in her hospitable soil, and that many a caravan should find rest here." On this occasion, he accused the British rulers of creating and fomenting disunity between the Hindus and the Muslims so as to weaken the force of nationalism. The object of this policy of 'divide and rule, he assessed, was "to prepare the Muslims for use against the new political awakening." He advised the Congress leaders to take a 'new step based on reason, justice and peace' and sought to dispel all fears lurking in the minds of the Muslims about their place under the new constitutional dispensation which they had inculcated as a result of the mischievous propaganda of the Muslim League. Hitting at the statements of the Viceroy

relating to some distant assurances of self-rule within the Empire after the termination of second World War, he regretted that the British government "does not accept the position that India has got the right of self-determination."

It is interesting to note that the real meaning of swaraj to be achieved through *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *satyagraha* (insistence on truth), as interpreted by Gandhiji, remained like a mystery for some time. It is for this reason that Gandhiji abruptly suspended his non violent non cooperation movement in February, 1922. Later on, he tried to drive home the implications of his novel techniques and at the Belgaum session (1924), he concluded his address with these words : "For satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within, It is latent in everyone of us. Like Swaraj it is our birth-right. Let us know it." It may be that most of the Congressmen could not fully grasp the meaning of Swaraj as revealed by Gandhiji, it is equally true that during this final phase of freedom struggle the Congress leaders fought for it with a developed sense of self-confidence. As Maulana Azad in his address delivered at the Special Delhi Congress (1923) said : "If the vital parts of the struggle are? sound, all these symptoms which are but physical donot constitute any threat to it." In the same year at the Cocanada Congress, Maulana Mohammed Ali said : "Swaraj is in your hands and can be won today, if each of you resolve to be ready to die at the country's call." It appears that now the Congress leaders frankly invoked the message of Swami Vivekanand to be bold. So in her address at the Kanpur Congress (1925) Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said : "In the battle of liberty, fear is the one unforgivable treachery and despair, the one unforgivable sin." Then, in his address at the Gauhati Congress, Srinivas Iyengar exhorted : The conditions in India are so favourable to the immediate attainment of swaraj that it were an easy achievement if we could but set our hands to it."

Shortly after the Tripuri Congress, Bose resigned and left the Congress. The second World War broke out in September, 1939 and then all Congress ministries in the provinces resigned in protest against the war policy of the British government. An astounding event took place when the Muslim League in

its Lahore session (March, 1940) adopted the resolution for having a separate and sovereign state of the Muslims. This opened the partition question. The Congress leaders rejected the two-nation theory of Jinnah and, for this reason, they rejected all British moves that sought to incorporate the scheme of India's partition in some devious form. No Congress session could be held during the war time after the Ramgarh Congress held in March, 1940. In 1942 the Congress launched the Quit India Movement. But the Muslim League and the Communists supported the British rule. After the termination of war in 1945 it became clear that Britain, though victorious, had emerged like a shattered power and would like to oblige the League before leaving India. In 1946 Muslim communalism was at its height. Thus, hitting at these developments, Acharya J.B. Kripalani in his address at the Meerut Congress (1946) said : "Today in India the Muslim League works in fear and suspicion and infects the whole Muslim community with it. . . . . I, therefore, hold that a Hindu who believes a Muslim to be an alien not only does wrong to his religion but is an ememy of the freedom and progress of India. On the other hand, if a Muslim who is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, believes and acts as if he were an alien on Indian soil, he does equal harm to his community and to the nation "

In 1946 the atmosphere of the country was surcharged with violence as a result of the role of the Muslim League that had taken to the path of 'direct action'. Keeping it in view, Acharya Kripalani gave a word of solmen warning : "Violence is ugly and futile in any case, but the unorganised, hysteric violence of the mob is worse than futile." And, while justifying the excellence of the ways of non-violence in the prevailing conditions of hatred and enmity in the country, he went on to say : "India has found the method and tried it to some purpose under a leadership that comes once in many centuries. It is a new method. . .But whether immediate success crowns our efforts or not, let us not forget that we are engaged in a good and great cause."

One more feature of much significance underlying all these addresses may be noted in the alignment of the case of India's

freedom of all subject peoples. This may be termed as internationalisation of India's nationalist movement.[6] For instance, Maulana Mohammed Ali in his address at the Cocanada Congress (1923) touched the problems of Turkey and pan-Islamism. In his address at the Belgaum Congress (1924) Mahatma Gandhi said : "I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence." In his address at the Lahore Congress (1929), Jawaharlal Nehru in more clear-cut and forceful words said : "India today is a part of the world movement. Not only China, Turkey, Persia and Egypt, but also Russia and the countries of the West are taking part in this movement, and India cannot isolate herself from it. We have our own problems, difficult and intricate, and we cannot run away from them and take shelter in the wider problems that affect the world. Buf if we ignore the world, we do so at our peril." Subhas Bose concluded his address at the Haripura Congress (1938) with these words : "Ours is a struggle not only against British but against world imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but for humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved." Underlying all these affirmations was an ardent desire to condemn imperialism of any sort and to support the case of international goodwill and cooperation. After the establishment of an international organisation, it signified support for such a body like the League of Nations and the United Nations. It is evident from what Acharya Kripalani said at the Meerut Congress (1946) : "We believe in a new world order based upon goodwill and cooperation. We believe that these objects can be achieved by an international organisation consisting of free and equal nations."

6. As Jawaharlal Nehru observes: "The Congress gradually developed a foreign policy which was based on the elimination of political and economic imperialism everywhere and the cooperation of free nations. This fitted in with the demand for Indian independence." *The Discovery of India*, p. 441.

CONTENTS

PART

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES (1923-1946)

Heaven of Freedom

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,

Where knowledge is free ;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls ;

Where words come out from the depth of truth ;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into
the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action ;

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
awake.

—**Rabindranath Tagore**

1

AN APPEAL FOR EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION*

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have to remember that the magnitude that the events of the world assume in the pages of history is never perceived by protagonists of those events. We too are passing through a revolutionary phase which fulfils all those conditions that according to the historians give rise to mighty revolutions. The world is heading fast towards a new turn. All things that till yesterday were believed to be unshakable truths are today shaking to their very core. Like its principles and beliefs, the boundaries of this world are also getting blurred. Many heights have fallen down and many depths have raised their level. Having risen to the maximum point, things have started falling and the gloomy night of despair has already reached the limit, after which sunrise seems to be around the corner. Who can foresee what the immediate future has in store ? Even so, whatever is happening makes it abundantly clear, and we don't need any fortune teller to tell us, that a new East is emerging through revolutionary efforts. The awakening in the East which for the past 25 years was only an awakening is today passing through subsequent stages. Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha's hands have awakened not only the sleeping destiny of Turkey, they have knocked at all the doors in the East. The echoes of that knock extend on the one hand to the plains of West Asia and, on the other, to the wilderness of Africa. They are even riding the waves of the Indian Ocean and it would not be surprising if the echoes of this knock reverberate through every nook and corner of the East.

Gentlemen, India cannot ignore or forget its natural and geographical associations with this peoples' struggle in the East. She has linked her own struggle with this movement,

*Extracts of Presidential address delivered by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at the Special Congress session held in Delhi on 15 Sept., 1923.

because she is deeply conscious of and shares the sentiments of togetherness and affinity which commonly shared purpose, events and times generate naturally in different groups living in a land. Consequently, India welcomes every nation of the East which is fighting for her freedom and feels sorry for each such nation as is lagging behind her companions in this field. India assures the patriots of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Morocco and those of other eastern countries that millions of Indian hearts are anxious for their success, and that the attainment of freedom by these countries is no less dear to our heart than our own independence.

Gentlemen, when we look towards the magnificent palace of the Caliphs in Turkey, to congratulate her on her splendid victories, our mind immediately turns to a tiny cell in India where India's greatest son is imprisoned. I am certain that if there is anyone outside Turkey who deserves to be congratulated on Turkey's victory, he is the great leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi, who raised his voice in Turkey's support at a time when no one even in Turkey had rallied forth to her defence. It was his discerning eyes that grasped the entire scope and depth of this issue at a glance and invited all Indians to make it a national issue and not that of the Muslims alone. Gentlemen, the struggle that India waged under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi for the Khilafat Movement, is a very special and significant event of the present times, and a debate will be carried on in the pages of history over its consequences. It is, indeed, before time for us to assess all the consequences of that struggle. Even so, some of the consequences are so obvious that they would admit of no doubt or debate and each one of these consequences is so important and significant that a struggle could be launched to attain it.

Due to the Khilafat Movement, the Hindu-Muslim unity issue, without which India's freedom would be but a disjointed dream, was able to overcome the obstacles which were blocking its progress for a long time.

Let us pause for a moment and analyse the troubles we face today in the context of the psychology of collective action It requires no reiteration that as in the case of individuals, the real source of actions of a nation lies in its mind. When the mental development of the members of a nation reaches the stage when it may express itself externally, it waits for favourable conditions to do so. Among the favourable conditions, a strong motivation is required to surmount all differences of views and opinions and mobilise all the desperate elements of the nation on a focal point. When the individual minds join together to form the collective mind of the group, they are moved more by emotions than by reason or logic. Consequently, the focal point too is created by emotions and not by logic. When this condition is fulfilled, active struggle commences and depending out of the force behind it, a confrontation with other emergent and opposing forces takes place. Thereafter, the struggle may succeed in attaining a target or, according to the natural laws of progression, it advances but haltingly. The stoppages on the way are of varying conditions and governed by various laws but, in any case, the law of action and reaction has its way to a certain extent. At such moments a sudden mood of despondency and weariness overtakes us, the effect is felt most on the body of ideas harboured by us. It seems as if a large number of stray papers which were tied in a knot had suddenly loosened or disunited. Differences begin to raise their head. Winds of dissension begin to blow and the national struggle has a most trying time. As, like all other conditions of a group, this too is physical, it is largely unaffected by reason or knowledge. However sensible the individuals might be, however aware of the past experiments of the world, they cannot restrain their hearts and minds from reacting to the conditions. Nevertheless, if the vital parts of the struggle are sound, all these symptoms which are but physical do not constitute any threat to it. Often it is but a momentary pause. On certain occasions it constitutes a difficult problem and sometimes it develops into a postponement which is full of dangers.

2

MUSLIMS AND THE NATIONAL MAINSTREAM*

Friends and Fellow-workers,

It has been the customs for every occupant of the Presidential chair of the Indian National Congress to thank the delegates that have conferred on him the highest honour it is in the power of the Indian nation to confer on an Indian. It has also been customary for him to disclaim that his merit deserved such signal honour and to declare his unfitness to rank with those that had previously occupied the Presidential chair. I have no doubt that the innate modesty of my predecessors infused into these disclaimers and declarations, a sincerity that saved them from the banality of mere conventions. But it is no such modesty that makes me further stale them by repetition. When two years ago, just on the eve of my imprisonment, a few of the Provinces had honoured me also with their nominations, I was still in a position to withdraw my name and to give at least partial expression to the shock of surprise I felt on that occasion. This time, however, fate had taken the matter almost entirely out of my hand; for soon after I was discharged from prison, I received from the Reception Committee here the telegraphic message that in a few days it would meet to put the seal of its agreement on the choice of the Provincial Congress Committees.

Believe me, if the circumstances that had led to the Special Session at Delhi, and still more, if that session itself had not revealed to me conditions that made the withdrawal of my name something in the nature of desertion, I would have withdrawn it even at that late stage. I consider it a presumption to preside here, and one reason for my reluctance and hesitation must be

*Presidential address delivered by Maulana Mohammed Ali at the Cocanada Congress held on 28 December, 1923 to 1st January, 1924.

obvious to all. It must be remembered that my association with the Indian National Congress is of very recent date. It was only in 1919 that for the first time I attended the Congress as a delegate, and then, too, my participation was not in the ordinary course. As some of you may remember, my brother and I had just been released from confinement as State Prisoners in the Betul goal in which our internment during the last four years of the War had culminated. We had, of course, proceeded straight to the Congress that had already commenced its session in martyred Amritsar. and since we could not have been elected as delegates in the usual way, the good people of Amritsar had forthwith adopted us as their own. The Nagpur Session that was held in the following year was the first, and, as it happened, also the only one previous to this which my brother and I attended as delegates elected in the ordinary course. Those who had hitherto occupied the Presidential Chair had been veterans that had grown grey in the service of the Congress. Can it, therefore, be merely conventional if one who is after all among the babes and sucklings of the Congress, thanks you for such an unusual mark of your favour ?

The only consideration which could justify this favour was that, although my associotion with the Congress was recent, it was coupled with my association with one of the very greatest, if also one of the Congressmen, one whom all eyes search in vain in this Pandal today. Ever since I first attended a session of the Congress as a delegate in 1919, his had been the one dominating personality. More than ever we need our great chief, Mahatma Gandhi, today ; and if God has willed that in his place one of his humblest followers, though not the least loving among them, should assist you in your deliberations, I can only feel what the Arab poet felt when he wistfully wrote :

'The death of great ones made us great !'

But although the man who was most responsible for Mahatma Gandhi's incarceration hoped that by burying him alive, as he called it, he would kill the spirit that the Mahatma had infused into the nation, I feel certain that it lives just as surely as the Mahatma lives himself. Relying on God's assis-

tance, and on your own kind indulgence, which, I think, I may with confidence bespeak, I invoke that spirit today, in the hope that with its aid I may prove not altogether unworthy of the high office to which your suffrage has all too generously called me.

Friends, the only one who can lead you is the one who had led you at Amritsar, at Calcutta, at Nagpur and at Ahmedabad, though each session of the Congress had its own elected President. Our generalissimo is today a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, and none can fill the void that his absence from our midst has caused. As for myself, I am but a comrade whom your loving kindness has called out from the ranks, and I plead for its continuance not only during the discussions of this session, but also throughout the year in which I am required by your constitution to assist you as your President

The Function of the President

On one point, however, you too are entitled to an assurance from me, and I offer it to you without hesitation. I have been a fighter all my life, and, of course, I have been in the habit of throwing all the vehemence of an impulsive and impetuous nature into my fights. But your choice of me as your President has robbed me of my freedom, and to regain that freedom, if for nothing else. I would have willingly foregone the great privilege of presiding on this occasion. However, in the cast you have assigned to me the unfamiliar role of the peace-maker, and even a fighter like me has to confess that, if anything is better than a fight, it is peace. I have, therefore, deprived myself of the opportunity to fight in order to help the cause of peace and unity, and I do not regret the surrender. As your President, I am here to serve you to the best of my power, and not in the capacity of a slave driver, and if, in following the convention of political societies like yours, I have to inaugurate this session with an address, it is essentially in the spirit of a servant of yours that I do so, and not as a dictator. I am here to assist you to form judgments on the various issues that may come up for your decision, and, so far as it lies in the

power of a fellow-worker and comrade of yours, I hope to help you to form only sound judgments, and to form them without waste of time, temper and energy. But these judgment must be yours, not mine; or, if you will, ours collectively in the truest sense. I have referred to the Mahatma's dominating personality; and we must admit how difficult it was to shake off his spell even for those rare individuals that desired to do so. I feel certain that Mahatma Gandhi neither asked, nor wanted anyone to surrender his judgment to him; and I have been told that just before his arrest he regretfully realised that quite a number of his followers and admirers, who had readily, and in all sincerity, signified their agreement with him had failed to realize that they were offering their allegiance only to the man, and were not accepting his measures as well on the strength of their own clear conviction. It will be an impertinence for me even to disclaim any such influence as the Mahatma undoubtedly exercised over the people, and I am envious that every vote cast on any side should be the result of the voter's own deliberate judgment, carrying with it the fullest individual responsibility. As for myself, if I kept back from you my own view of any matter of vital importance merely for fear that it might not be acceptable to you, I shall certainly not be serving you truly. For another thing it would not be consistent with true democracy. But we shall only be making a mockery of democracy if freedom was denied to the delegates of the Congress merely to please its President, or silence was imposed on the many just to secure the goodwill of the few.

Congress Session not Division Lobby

Nevertheless, we have to understand that the country did not elect six thousand delegates, and we have not travelled to Cocanada from every corner of it as to division lobbies, merely to cast our votes, and to register our individual judgments already formed before we set out on our journey. What good could we do ourselves and to others if, like Omar the Tent-Maker Poet of Persia, we "evermore came out by the same door wherein we went" ? If we do not wish to turn our journey into utter futility and find so much labour lost, the opinions we

had formed, individually or in groups, before we started, must be tested here by comparison with the opinions of our fellow delegates and influenced by them. And it is no shame, but on the contrary, very often much to our credit, if we change our views in deference to the judgments of others whom we credit with greater sagacity or experience, or to the cumulative weight of the judgment of a large majority of people, although they be in no way superior to us as individuals, even though at the time itself we are not fully convinced that our own views are wrong. I am second to no man in my respect for deeply cherished convictions. But convictions are not on every occasion to be treated as matters of conscience, and I have the support here of Cromwell, one of the most conscientious statesmen, known to history, who used to implore his fellow-workers to remember that it was possible they might be mistaken.

Plea For Self-Restraint and Accommodation

Every delegate has the right to give expression to his views with perfect freedom, and to do so on as many questions as he likes. He has also the right to move as many resolutions as he pleases; to move amendments to as many resolutions proposed by others as he thinks fit; and to divide the house as frequently as he chooses. But no real work is possible if such rights are exercised without proper consideration for the opinion and convenience of others, and particularly without regard for the best interests of a distressed and distracted nation. Our great chief had often to deplore that the enthusiasm of our people in their assemblages lacked self-restraint and discipline, and, in truth, it was their innate peace-loving nature and their good humour that so often proved their saving grace. Self-restraint and discipline can be taught to the masses only by such leaders as the Congress delegates and the self-restraint and discipline of the delegates themselves is the best guarantee of the self-restraint and discipline of the masses. Above all, I trust that in giving expression to our views, no matter how strong, we shall avoid such partisanship as feeds on malice and revels in violent recriminations. Our great chief is noted throughout the world for his gospel of

Non-Violence, and it would be a sad commentary on our allegiance to one who would not tolerate violence in thought or word towards an enemy if we excluded from our boasted non-violence our best friends. I would not for the words change popular enthusiasm into quietism or indifference. We need discipline, not death. We must have the necessary steam to propel the national machinery; but it must be under proper control Closely allied to this is the principle of compromise and accommodation. Ours is nothing if not a war of principles, and we cannot afford to forsake principle even for the sake of peace. But short of that we are being called upon by the state of our nation to-day to make every sacrifice in order to accommodate those who are as stanuch nationalists as ourselves, but who do not always see eye to eye with us. It is our particular distinction that our great chief has spiritualized politics, and we can no longer be content with a politics that is completely divorced from ethics. But in politics we may not always be able to secure the best. Life is one long second best, and there should be no bar against the second best if, by being content with it far the time being, we can carry large sections of the nation with us on the road to victory. Above all, let us not think of winning party victories when we have still to win the victory of freedom against slavery, and of justice against a whole nation's wrongs. Forgive me, friends, for this homiletic preface, but I think I owed it to you as well as to myself. And now let us begin.

The Mussalmans and the Congress

I have referred to the fact that my association with the Congress is of very recent date; but this admission is not merely personal. It involves the political history of the community to which I belong, and if I give a brief outline of it to you, it is only for the purpose of elucidating a problem which is the most vital of all the problems we have to solve to-day. When, in 1885, some Indian leaders, assisted by their British sympathisers, founded the Indian National Congress, the Mussalmans of India did not participate in the movement except in a few individual cases. If their lack of Western education made them

unfit to take part in a movement essentially that of the classes educated according to Western notions, their political temper, made them an element that was not unlikely to prove dangerous to any political movement. They had already lost the rule of India, but the tradition of that rule had survived. This had increased the aversion they had always felt for the new type of education. The rule of India had finally passed from Muslim into English hands by slow and hardly perceptible degrees in the hundred years that intervened between the battle of Plassey and the Indian Mutiny; but the Mussalmans had not ceased to regard the new rulers of India as something very inferior to themselves in civilization and culture. This storm of ill-will and disdain had been gathering force for a whole century, and was at last precipated in 1857. The Mutiny began near Calcutta as an affair of the Indian army, but in the storm-centre of Delhi and of my own Province, where it had to be fought out if English rule was to continue in India, it soon attracted to itself many forms of discontent, and religion was inextricably mixed up with politics. Although so many Mussalmans had, at enormous risk to themselves, assisted the British at a time when hardly anyone could have predicted their eventual success with any degree of assurance, it was the Muslim aristocracy in those parts that suffered most from the terrible aftermath of the Mutiny. In fact, in its permanent results, even more than in some of its terrors, it could, without any great exaggeration, be compared to the social upheaval that the French Revolution meant to the old noblility of France. The remnants of Muslim aristocracy, deprived of all influence and of many of its possessions, certainly did not expect the return of Muslim rule Nevertheless, a whole generation of Mussalmans kept sullenly aloof from all contact with the culture of the new rulers of India which in their heart of hearts they still despised. They were in no mood to take advantage of the education provided by the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, founded in the very year in which the Mutiny convulsed the regions which formed the political centre of Mu lim India. It was a natural consequence of this attitude of Mussalmans who sulked in their tents that when, nearly thirty years later, a new generation of Indians, who owed

their education to the English, inaugurated a political movement on Western lines, Indian Mussalmans should be unfit by lack of such education to participate in that movement. Nevertheless, the Congress which called itself "Indian" and "National" felt the need of Muslim participation, for it could not justify its title without it.

Syed Ahmad Khan Opposes Muslim Participation

Efforts were, therefore, made early enough to enlist Mussalmans as delegates. But at this juncture, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the great pioneer of Western education among Mussalmans, stepped into the political arena, and in two historic speeches, one delivered at Lucknow on the 28th December, 1887, and the other at Meerut on the 16th March, 1988, decisively checked whatever signs the Mussalmans had shown of political activity in support of the Congress movement. It is by no means a difficult task to criticise those speeches, for they contained many fallacies to which no politically minded Mussalman could subscribe today. But I am not one of those who declare, merely on the strength of some ill-advised expressions characteristic of so militant a controversialist as Syed Ahmad Khan, that he was opposed to the co-operation of Hindus and Mussalmans.

The True Nature and Motives of His Opposition

Although his own public career after retirement from Public Service was identified with a movement for the uplift of his own community, he was a good Indian as well as a good Muslim and many of his speeches prove him to have been an ardent patriot inspired with the love of Indian unity. And those who knew him personally can testify to the staunchness of his friendship with many Hindus, which could not have survived the narrow prejudices of which he has sometimes been accused.

No more true is the charge that he was opposed to Muslim participation in politics for all time. Whatever arguments he may have used in the two political utterances to which I have

referred, to convince his Muslim hearers, there were two arguments, and two only, that had obviously convinced Syed Ahmad Khan himself of the undesirability of Muslim participation in the Congress at the time. He realised to the full that nothing would suit the temper of the Mussalmans of his day better than the vocation of critics of their British supplanters in the government of India; and he also realised that such a pursuit would be as dangerous to the continuance and progress of a peaceful political movement like the Congress as it was easy. This was the first argument that impelled Syed Ahmad Khan to keep his community under restraint in polities. The second argument was no less potent. Mussalmans must educate themselves if they desired the uplift of their community, and yet it was no easy task to reconcile Mussalmans to Western education even in an institution of their own, which unlike Government colleges and schools, would not divorce religious from secular learning. The easy pursuit of a policy in which the Muslims could act as destructive critics of the hated infidel Government was sure to offer superior attractions to the dull and drab constructive programme of the educationalist, and he therefore set himself to oppose all diversion of Muslim activities into the more attractive, but for the time being less useful, political channel. Reviewing the actions of a bygone generation to-day when it is easier to be wise after the event, I must confess I still think the attitude of Syed Ahmad Khan was eminently wise, and much as I wish that some things which he had said should have been left unsaid, I am constrained to admit that no well-wisher of Mussalmans, nor of India as a whole, could have followed a very different course in leading the Mussalmans.

Be it remembered that the man who enunciated this policy was not at the time a *persona grata* to the major portion of the community which he sought to lead. He was hated as a heretic because of the heterodoxy of his aggressive rationalism in interpreting the Holy Quran, and his militant opposition to popular superstitions believed in by the bulk of the orthodox and to shackling customs consecrated by time, though wholly unauthorised by Islam. He was abused and vilified by hundreds of thousands of his co-religionists, and for long the college that he

had founded at Aligarh was the *bete noire* of the pious Muslim. And yet the entire community followed his political lead without a murmur. Neither fallacious arguments nor even political clap-trap could have possessed such potency, and it is my firm belief that his advocacy succeeded mainly becausse of the soundness of the policy advocated.

For two decades thereafter the Mussalmans had hardly any politics or any political institution worth the name. On important occasions when Syed Ahmad Khan, and, of course, his British supporters, thought that any demand of the Congress if satisfied would not be productive of good for the Mussalmans, he would call together a few of his friends, mostly Trustees of the Aligarh College, who used to form a society bearing some such name as the "Muslim Defence Association," and a resolution of this body would be published in the *Pioneer* and in Syed Ahmad Khan's own local weekly newspaper in due course. That was all that the Mussalmans would do in those days in the field of politics.

I am far from denying that Syed Ahmad Khan knew perfectly well that his policy was more than acceptable to his official supporters, who would have in all likelihood put every possible obstruction in the way of his college and his Educational Conference if he had followed another less acceptable to them. But a very close study of his character leads me to declare that he was far from possessing the sycophancy with which some of his political critics have credited him. Indeed, even the opportunism of which his policy savoured could not have been entirely palatable to a nature so independent as his. In the year 1907, soon after the commencement of a new era in Muslim politics inaugurated by the foundation of the Muslim League, to which I shall presently refer, there occurred a strike of the students of Syed Ahmad Khan's College at Aligarh, owing to the support given against them by their own English Principal and Professors to the Police that had picked up a quarrel with one of them. Just about that time fell the anniversary of Syed Ahmad Khan's death celebrated annually in the College as the "Founder's Day." For that occasion I had written in

Urdu an Ode addressed to the late Founder of my College, and referring to this unmistakable indication of the students self-respect and of their willingness to make the necessary self-sacrifice demanded by the haughty disdain of the foreigner, I had said :

"It is you that had taught the community all this 'mischief' if we are its culmination, you are its commencement.

"The Arch-Rebel"

That I am not alone in this estimate of Syed Ahmad Khan's character and policy will be proved by an interesting conversation that I shall relate. Once when my brother was still in the Public Service, an old English official asked him who, he thought, was the greatest rebel in India against British rule. And, correcting my brother's answer that experienced official had declared that it was no other than Syed Ahmad Khan, Loyalist of loyalists ! when my brother protested against this astonishing judgment, he said : "Do you think young Mussalmans who are being taught at Aligarh almost as well as our own boys at Harrow and Winchester, who live their lives and can beat them at their own games, would obsequiously serve them when they come out as Indian Civilians or members of such other superior services. No, Mr. Shaukat Ali, the days of British rule in India are numbered, and it is your loyal Syed Ahmad Khan is the arch-rebel to-day !"

Like only too many of us, this British official too had failed to realise the paralysing effect of the education given in the colleges and schools established or favoured by this foreign Government and had only foreseen the dissatisfacton and discontent that it must inevitably produce. With a Muslim University, chartered, aided and controlled by Government still flourishing at Aligarh, so far as the numbers of the teachers and the taught and a University Chest filled with the contributions of the rich are concerned, though robbed of all generous ideals and national and communal ambitions, and existing side by side with another, poor in everything save its ideals

and its dreams, into which my old college had seemed to have transformed itself three years ago, I cannot boast that the "arch-rebel" of Aligarh has altogether succeeded in his "rebellious" endeavour. But it is my firm conviction that he had always aimed and intended to produce staunch Muslim and patriotic Indians even if he could not perhaps contemplate a near enough future for India in which his "young barbarians all at play," could be other than "loyal British subjects."

Aligarh and the Muslim League

To my mind, the most important problem to-day is the problem of Indian unity and India's nationhood, which, in other words, means the old, old Hindu-Muslim problem. We are living to-day which for India is just as distinct as any year in the history of the world. This is the pre-Gandhian era, and what has gone before was practically the days of ignorance or as we in Islam call the days before our Prophet. The problem to-day, the problem of Hindu-Muslim Unity, is not precisely the same as it was in the pre-Gandhian days and yet it is a distressing and distracting problem. As one who is very late in coming to the Congress, not on any personal grounds but the whole community was very late in coming to the Congress, the Mussalmans expect from me a reply to the question asked by many and although unasked by many more, still felt by all, what would be the policy of the Mussalmans to-day in reference to Hindu-Mussalman tensions. I could not avoid that subject, but what would be my answer? I have read Logic, though I do not believe in it any more than my friend, Deshabandhu Das. "Life is greater than Logic," he said, which means that history which was my subject for my Degree at Oxford is greater than Logic or Ph losophy.

My only argument which has been developed at great length in this address is on this one single tropic of Hindu-Moslem Unity, a unity which is nothing else but a repetition of the whole history of the Muslim development and I have sought to prove and I think I have conclusively proved that the Mussal-

mans did not rush into politics, that the Mussalmans did not rush into the Congress, that the Mussalmans did not rush into non-cooperation with the English and even to co-operation with their Hindu fellow countrymen. But every step that they took, they took deliberately, slowly, almost painfully and reluctantly. But every force of circumstances and the reality of the situation drove them to take that step and it is that reality which is to keep them where they are and not let them go out of the Congress into those alluring backwaters of old politics in which the Government kept us so long and wants us to keep us to-day. After this by way of preface, I need not, I think, apologise to any of you even though you may not be Mussalmans at all for my lengthy address because I wanted to exhaust the subject so that, if after that, I was pestered, as I am daily pestered, by my own co-religionists to give them an answer as to what is to be done in future, I could only refer them to the paragraphs specially devoted for such questions. I did not want to leave out a single loop-hole and if I speak to my co-religionists frankly to-day, it is from my bitter experience, as I have said somewhere in this address of mine, a trophy which is something that people who had been fighting a battle, value most. A trophy is greatly cherished by warriors and experience is the most cherished trophy and it is a trophy made up of weapons that have hurt us. I have gone into the whole history of the Muhammadan community, how it was almost as bitter in 1857, against the British in India as it is to-day and how some of its best leaders kept that community out of the Indian National Congress when it came to be formed. The Mussalmans had lost their rule of India. It had slipped out of their hands gradually and imperceptibly in the long course of a hundred years between the battle of Plassey and the Indian Mutiny of 1857 as it is generally styled. When they woke up at last to discover the true situation—they did not awake fully they were still half asleep. That had lost their rule, but its traditions still remain with them and instead of working for victory after defeat, they began to sulk in their tents. They were justified to possess that temper, a temper in which they would have ruined any peaceful movement as the Indian National Congress has

always been. They would have been a most dangerous thorn in the body-politic of the nation, because they were in that temper and were not sufficiently educated in Western lore. At least in the pre-Gandhian days, I believe the Indian National Congress was a movement only of the educated classes, of those who had been educated along Western ways. Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Aligarh College, where I myself and my brother and a large number of Mussalmans including extremists like Mr. Sherwani, Mr. Kwaja, Dr. Mohamed, have been educated there foresaw in the then tenor of the Mussalmans that to let them go into a body of critics of the Government would be to let them go into a place where they would revel in criticism and do nothing else ; they would have even wrecked the Congress. I have also said here, you will notice, I have traced the close connection between the foundation of the Indian National Congress and the foundation of the first important national or rather communal Muslim political institution known as the Muslim League. It practically took 30 years, which corresponds to the growth of a new generation, it took 30 years for the foundation of the Universities of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay to come into being. The first political educational centre was started at Aligarh. I leave here the Muslim history. I now jump over to the Muslim period.

Nearly thirty years after the foundation of the Universities in the three Presidency towns of India—a period which corresponds with the growth of a new generation—the Congress had inevitably come into existence. It was no easy task that Syed Ahmed Khan had accomplished in founding an Anglo-Oriental College of his own community within two decades of the Indian Mutiny in the very regions which had formed the storm centre in 1857. In obedience, as it were, to a law of nature, once more nearly thirty years after the foundation of this College, there came into being a political institution of the Mussalmans who had not availed themselves of the educational facilities provided by the State Universities, and could not consequently share in the political awakening which those Universities had indirectly brought about. And it is not without significance

that fairly prominent among the founders of the Muslim League at Dacca at the end of 1906 were some alumni of Syed Ahmed Khan's own College.

This inaugurated a new era in the political life of the Indian Mussalmans. Some months previously a Muslim Deputation had waited at Simla on the Viceroy, Lord Minto, to place before him and his Government a statement of the Muslim demands in connection with the Minto-Morely Reforms then foreshadowed. To follow the fashion of British journalists during the War, "there is no harm *now* in saying" that the Deputation's was a "command" performance! It was clear that Government could no longer resist the demands of educated Indians, and, as usual, it was about to dole out to them a morsel that would keep them gagged for some years. Hitherto the Mussalmans had acted very much like the Irish prisoner in the dock who, in reply to the judge's inquiry whether he had any counsel to represent him in the trial, had frankly replied that he had certainly not engaged counsel, but that he had "freinds in the jurry" ! But now the Muslims' "friends in the jury" had themselves privately urged that the accused should engage duly qualified counsel like all others. From whatever source the inspiration may have come, there is no doubt that the Muslim cause was this time properly advocated. In the common territorial electorates the Mussalmans had 'certainly not succeeded in securing anything like adequate or real representation, and those who denounced and deplored the creation of separate electorates for which the Mussalmans had pleaded should have remembered that separate electorates were the consequence, and *not* the cause, of the separation between Mussalmans and their more numerous Hindu brethren.

I like to mention in this connection that not long ago, I was present at Belgaum and the Municipal Board presented an address to my brother and myself. It was particularly asked by that large-hearted Brahman Mr. Desphande (Mr. Deshmukh ?) to speak something with reference to Brahman and non-Brahman quarrels. I said I have every sympathy with both the Brahman and the non-Brahman sections. I said that I greatly sym-

pathise with the non-Brahmans and that this was the *Karma* of the majority, because I felt certain that Brahmans have learnt the lesson and in order that it is fully crystallised in India, they could never give too much to the non-Brahmans if they could thereby make the whole of India a perfectly united nation. I felt certain that in future this were the spirit prevailing in the various communities, more particularly in the strongest communities, the minorities would readily join the nationalist movement and would be only too glad to work shoulder to shoulder with the majorities, without any diffidence, without any hesitation, without any mistrust or reluctance on their part.

Separate Electorates Hasten Indian Unity

But little could the official supporters of the Muslim community have suspected at the time that, paradoxical as it may seem, the creation of separate electorates was hastening the advent of Hindu-Muslim unity. For the first time a real franchise, however restricted, was being offered to Indians, and if Hindus and Mussalmans remained just as divided as they had hitherto been since the commencement of British rule, and often hostile to one another, mixed electorates would have provided the best battle-ground for inter-communal strifes, and would have still further widened the gulf separating the two communities. Each candidate for election would have appealed to his own community for votes, and would have based his claims for preference on the intensity of his ill-will towards the rival community, however disguised this may have been under some such formula as "the defence of the community's interests." Bad as this would have been, the results of an election in which the two communities were not equally matched would have been even worse, for the community that failed to get its representative elected would have inevitably borne a yet deeper grudge against its successful rival. Divided as two communities were, there was no chance for any political principles coming into prominence during the elections. The creation of separate electorates did a great deal to put a stop to this inter-communal warfare, though I am far from oblivious of the fact that when inter-communal jealousies are

acute, the men that are more likely to be returned even from communal electorates are just those who are noted for their ill-will towards the rival community.

"United Faiths of India"

In the controversy that raged round the representation of Mussalmans *as a community* I had taken my full share; but no sooner the Muslim claim had been recognised in practice in the elections to the enlarged council in 1910, I decided to launch a weekly journal of my own from the seat of the Government of India in order to assist my community in taking its proper share in the political life of the country. I was particularly anxious to help it to understand that, while endeavouring to satisfy the pressing needs of the present, which would inevitably bring it now and then into conflict with other elements in the body-politic, it should never lose sight of the prospects of the future when ultimately all communal interests had to be adjusted so as to harmonise with the paramount interests of India.

I had long been convinced that here in this country of hundreds of millions of human beings, intensely attached to religion, and yet infinitely split up into communities, sects and denominations, Providence had created for us the mission of solving a unique problem and working out a new synthesis, which was nothing less than a Federation of Faiths! As early as in 1904 when I had been only two years in India after my return from Oxford, I had given to this idea a clear, if still somewhat hesitating expression, in an address delivered at Ahmedabad on the "Proposed Mohomedan University." "Unless some new force"—this is what I had said on that occasion—"unless some new force, *other than the misleading unity of opposition*, unites this vast continent of India, it will either remain a geographical misnomer, or what I think it will ultimately do, become a Federation of Religions." I had noted the strength of the centrifugal force of Indian communities; I have got huge bunches of telegrams that came from Bengal, still more from Mr. Das, and still more from the Punjab. I still feel that there are strong centrifugal forces in India. And yet hope and faith and the deep yearning for freedom had even

then made me realise the latent centripetal force of Indian unity. The lines of cleavage were too deeply marked to permit a unity other than federal ; and yet, as I had observed in the address from which I have already quoted, the cleavage was not territorial or racial in character, but religious. For more than twenty years I have dreamed the dream of a federation, grandeur, nobler and infinitely more spiritual than the United States of America, and to-day when many a political Cassandra prophesies a return to the bad old days of Hindu-Muslim dissensions, I still dream that old dream of "United *Faiths* of India." It was in order to translate this dream into reality that I had launched my weekly newspaper, and had significantly called it *The Comrade*—"comrade of all and partisan of none !"

I hope my Swarajist friends and No-Change friends will see I deserve the title of Comrade being a comrade to all ; that I made the "Comrade" a friend and comrade of all and a partisan of none.

Friends, is it so entirely out of place if I quote a little from the first words that I had contributed to the first issue of the *Comrade* ? In view of the political controversy that had been raging in India, I naturally shrank from relating my dream when making my *debut* before a sceptical, matter-of-fact world. And yet the dream was all the time there for those who did not despise dreams.

We have no faith (I wrote on the 14 January, 1911) in the cry that India is united. If India was united where was the need of dragging the venerable President of this year's Congress (Sir William Wedderburn) from a distant home ? The bare imagination of a feast will not dull the edge of hunger. We have less faith still in the sanctimoniousness that transmutes in its subtle alchemy a rapacious monopoly into fervent patriotism.

"Even as poor birds deceiv'd with painted grapes,
Do surfeit by the eye, and pine the maw."

Those of us who cannot distinguish true gold from the glitter of spurious coins, will one day surfeit by the ear and pine the heart. But the person we love best, fear the most, and trust the least is the impatient idealist. Goethe said of Byron that he was a prodigions poet, but that when he reflected, he was a child. Well, we think no better and no worse of the man who combines great ideals and a greater impatience. So many efforts, well-meaning as well as ill-begotten, have failed in bringing unity to this distracted land, that we cannot spare even cheap and scentless flowers of senitment for the grave of another ill-judged endeavour. We shall not make the mistake of gumming together pieces of broken glass, and then cry over the unsuccessful result, or blame the refractory material. In other words, we shall endeavour to face the situation boldly, and respect facts, howscever ugly and ill-favoured. It is poor statesmanship to slur over inconvenient realities, and not the least important success in achieving unity is the honest and frank recognition of deep-seated prejudices that hinder it and the yawning differences that divide.

But while providing for to-day, we must not forget the morrow. It is our firm belief that if the Mussalmans or the Hindus attempt to achieve success in opposition to, or even without the co-operation of one another they will not only fail, but fail ignominiously. (*Hear hear*) But every step has to be taken with a caution. Nothing in history, ancient or modern, provides useful analogy to the condition of modern India History never repeats itself. But it is still the best educative force for mankind, and it has its lessons for us also. The problems of India are almost international. But when the statesmen and philanthropists of Europe, with all its wars of interests and national jealousies, do not despair of abolishing war and placing Pax on the throne of Bellona, shall we despair of Indian nationality? (President's comment :—Europe has made a mess of its arbitration courts and its international efforts at securing peace. But I hope we who are a more spiritual people will achieve unity even before Europe can do.) We may not create to-day the patriotic fervour and the fine national frenzy of Japan with its forty millions of homogeneous people. But a concordat like

that of Canada is not beyond the bounds of practicability. It may not be a love-marriage, born of romance and poetry. But a *marriage de convenanace*, honourably contracted and honourably maintained, is not to be despised. Let us begin with honest prose, and the Muses will not forbid the bans. Even this is no easy task. But it is one worthy of the sons and daughters of India, and deserves their toil nnd self-sacrifice. O ! Unity,

> "Thou wilt come, join men, knit nation unto nation ;
> But not for us who watch to-day and burn,
> Thou wilt come ; but after what long years of trial,
> Weary watching, Patient longing, dull denial !"

Friends, three years ago we were privileged to catch more than a fleeting glimpse of the unity of which I had dreamed and if to-day we have to admit, as we must, that the dream has not been realised as fully as we wish, we shall have once more to examine the situation carefully and to face inconvenient facts with candour and with courage. I propose to do that presently, but not to break the thread of my narrative I revert to the situation as it existed at the time when I made my journalistic *debut*.

Muslims and Foreign Affairs

As I had foreseen, the separate electorates returned both Hindus and Mussalmans who were not averse to combine in the various legislatures to support the popular cause. Nevertheless, inter-communal hostility did not altogether cease in the country. A new element was, however, unexpectedly added to the situation by the aggression of Western nations against Muslim States and its effect on Muslim sentiment in India, and although there are not wanting even to-day staunch non-Muslim nationalists who look askance at Indian Muslim feeling with regard to Muslim affairs abroad, a little reflection would show that the new element to which I have referred even while undoubtedly diverting the attention of Indian Mussalmans to some extent from affairs at home, hastened Muslim disillusionment with regard to their traditional reliance on their foreign Government and thereby contributed greatly to Indian unity.

Here I must say that at that time, I did not expect that foreign affairs of the Muslims would to any great extent occupy my time or energy. I still thought that the greatest problem of all before us was the Hindu-Moslem question in India. But what happened since 1911 ? Blow after blow was struck at the temporal power of Islam and never in the whole of 1300 and odd years of Islamic history had there ever been a period so gloomy and disastrous for us, until very recently of course. With regard to the foreign affairs, as I shall presently show, some people still say—why should the Musslmans of India be so busy with the Khilafat and why not they concentrate their attention entirely upon India and its problems. Well, if you carefully examine the history of the last dozen years you will come to know how our disasters in foreign affairs have thrown us back on you. We feel grateful for the concentration of the Mussalmans on foreign affairs outside the confines of India, because it has made us realise that we must after all come to Indians for the proper solution of our difficulties in the foreign countries abroad.

In India too an important thing happened. In foreign affairs we realised from the way in which Great Britain behaved towards Morocco, the Arabs in Tripoli, the Turks in the Balkans, even in 1912 that these "Friends in the Jury," as they call themselves, were not friendly at all. I had perpetrated an epigram. Many a man told me such and such a man had great influence with the Government. We now know what this 'influence' means. It means really that the Government has great influence with them and over them. We realised that when we used as cats' paws to fight our Hindu brethren, and when afterwards we were betrayed even in the most wonted traditions of our religion abroad as well as in India.

But I refer to the Partition of Bengal and the troubles between the Hindus and the Mussalmans which followed. The two great protagonists, my friend the Editor of the *Servant* and my friend, Desabandhu Das, who are now ranged on opposite sides, were then combined and united in their condemnation of

the partition of Bengal. The benighted and the uneducated Mussalman wanted the Bengal Partition to remain unaltered, But really I never believed in that Partition. Only I ask you to realise the fact that this Government had to look upon the Mussalmans to fight as its auxiliaries against the Hindus in Bengal. Undoubtedly, I say, the Partition of Bengal, although it was most unjust and carried out in most vindictive spirit by Lord Curzon, did benefit the Mussalmans to a certain extent. Yet, when the Government found that things were getting too hot for it, it dropped the Mussalmans like a hot potato. Never was a more ignoble betrayal perpetrated in the whole history of Indian politics.

The Outlook in 1911

I had intended the *Comrade* to be the organ that was to voice the sentiments I entertained regarding the need of an inter-communal federation for India. It was to prepare the Mussalman to make their proper contribution to territorial patriotism without abating one jot of the favour of their extra-territorial sympathies, which are, as you must know, part of the quintessence of Islam. When I first thought of launching on a career of journalism, I did not expect that any but a small fraction of my attention and energies would be attracted by Muslim politics outside the confines of my own country. It is true that affairs in Egypt did not present a very reassuring appearance ; nor did the new Constitutions in Turkey and Persia receive, after an initial outburst of welcome, their full measure of sympathy which we in India felt to be due to such heroic and hazardous enterprises from England, the one European power with which we had all along been exclusively concerned. The only other European Power on our political horizon had been Russia. So long as after the overthrow of France a hundred years previously she was the most considerable of the Powers on the continent of Europe, and had further aggravated that situation by aiming at being a yet greater power on the continent of Asia, everyone in India had been sedulously taught by the masters of India's destinies to regard her as enemy of mankind, add to believe that it was the sacred mission of England to

thwart and defeat her. But the rapid rise of Japan and its signal success in defeating Russia in Far East, while it encouraged other Oriental nations to hold up their heads and to hope, so radically altered the position of Russia that, from being an inveterate enemy, she became a friend and in all but name an ally of England, even though it was her victorious adversary that had been, and still remained, the acknowledged and official ally of that nation. This speedily reacted on Eastern politics, not only Persia, where Russia openly stood up as a high-handed dictator, and where it was soon to cause a hail-storm uf ultimatums, but also in Turkey, where the rivalries of the Slav and the Teuton now reappeared with added vehemence in the form of a struggle between *Entente* and Alliance. Once more had the Near East become the storm-centre of European politics.

All this was no doubt disquieting enough to Indian Musssalmans who had been brought up from their childhood to regard England as the friend and Russia as the enemy of Muslim States. But the political controversies of Hindus and Mussalmans appeared none the less to be their immediate concern in India. The passions that these inter-communal differences had unfortunately aroused just a little previously had lent to them the semblance of acute international conflict, while Turkey and Persia still seemed comparatively remote.

But things did not proceed precisely in the way in which I had so optimistically forecasted. The year 1911 proved a fateful year for Muslim States. The new Governments of Turkey, Persia and Morocco all began to meet with squalls in their initial voyage of reform and progress, which soon developed into regular storms.

The Durbar Announcement

In India, too, the year proved more fateful for Mussalmans than anyone could have predicted. Just before the close of the year the King-Emperor made a portentous announcement at Delhi where he had come ostensibly to announce in person in an Imperial Durbar only the event of his Coronation that year.

It was admittedly an "abrupt departure from the tradition of British Government and a complete dislocation of official habits." But this unusual procedure, and the secrecy which had been maintained, not only at the expense of India but also at that of Local Governments, were justified on the ground that the Imperial Announcement was "one of the most weighty decisions ever taken since the establishment of the British rule in India," and that the discussion of measures which were being taken in consequence of an agitation that indicated "bitterness of feeling" and was at the same time "very widespread and unyielding" would have in its turn caused endless agitation. As we all know, the Announcement comprised a re-adjustment of territories upsetting Lord Curzon's vindictive Partition of Bengal and the creation of new Province of Behar and Orissa after the re-union of Bengal—East and West. It also indirectly penalised Bengal by shifting the capital to Delhi. As I wrote in che *Comrade* at the time, I was in favour of both these schemes, "taking each by itself as wholly unconnected schemes," and "irrespective of the time, place and procedure preferred by the Government of India for the Announcement." The partition in the form then approved was due in 1905, and the transfer of the capital was needed in 1858. Lords Curzon and Middleton had sinned in a hurry, and it would have seemed that Lords Hardinge and Crewe were repenting at leisure. But it was clear from the King-Emperor's Announcement as well as from the despatches of the Government of India and the Secretary of State, that 'the key-stone of the whole project" was the "proposal to make Delhi the future capital of India" ; that it was only "as a consequence of the transfer" that the Partition was modified ; that the Bengalis were expected to be "reconciled to the change" of capital by "*other features of the scheme which were specially designed to give satisfaction to Bengali sentiment*"; and that the re-union of the two Bengals was no more than "the compensation which will be offered to Bengali sentiment" for "the objections to the transfer which are likely to be entertained in some quarters." There was not a word in the Government of India's Despatch about such things as the financial embarrassment of the administration in Eastern Bengal, the unsatisfactory results of yoking Assam with a part of Bengal,

or the difficulties of communication between the Rajshahi Division and Dacca, all of which could have been utilized to justify the unsettlement of a "settled fact." The Partition of 1905 was, indeed, acknowledged in that Despatch to have fufilled "two of the chief purposes which its authors had in view." "It relieved," so ran the Despatch, "the over-burdened administration of Bengal, and it gave the Mahomedan population of Eastern Bengal advantages and opportunities of which they had, perhaps, hitherto not had their fair share." But Bengal had to be deprived of the distinction of claiming the capital of India as its own capital as well, and of the opportunities it had thus enjoyed of criticising the Government of India and subjecting it to constant pressure from such close quarters. We had already been familiarised, to the extent of feeling downright moral contempt for it, with the doctrine of compensation in the foreign politics of Europe, according to which Morocco had been given to France for the sake of a free hand for the English in Egypt, and Tripoli had been all but given to Italy, while Germany had made her famous *Panther* leap at Agadir. This fatal doctrine had now peacefully penetrated into the internal administration of India. "Eastern Bengal and Assam," wrote the Government of India, "have no doubt benefitted greatly by the Partition, and the Mahomedans of the province, who form a large majority of the population, are loyal and contented ; but the resentment among the Bengalis in both the provinces of Bengal, who hold most of the land, fill the professions and exercise a preponderating influence in public affairs, is as strong as ever" As I wrote on that occasion, "what could be easier than to politely disburden the loyal and contended Peter of his few worldly belongings in order to load the discontented, if not disloyal, Paul with rewards and compensation ? The Mussalmans have no *Panther* to send to Agadir and it is too well-established a rule of diplomacy that : no *Panther*, no compensation !"

Incidents

Now I will relate to you an incident which will take away something of the exhaustive nature of my address. I will relate to you an incident which happened when the Delhi announce-

ment was made by His Majesty the King-Emperor. My dear old friend, Sir Charles Cleveland, the Head of C.I.D. (take note of it, said the President turning towards the Government Reporters in the Press Block—we was standing very close to me saw me getting the first copy of the announcement that was being handed to the men in the Press gallery where I was seated as the Editor of the *Comrade.* This official, as I was reading it to myself, asked me : "Well, Mohammed Ali, is it anything for you or for me ? " because, he knew nothing of it. It was in fact kept secret from high official, even from the Lieutenant Governor of East Bengal. What was my answer to this question ? I said : "There is nothing for me ; but, Sir Charles, there is plenty of work for you." I think we have given them some work to do.

You know the Mahomedan era begins from the flight of the Prophet, which is known as the Hijra. I call 1912 as Lord Hardinge's Hijra, the flight of Lord Hardinge who went back from the "Partition of Bengal" said to be a 'settled fact". There is the policy of 'give and-take' to which I have to refer in this connection. In the case of the loyal and steady Behar, it was nothing but a case of 'take' in regard to the Partition and re-partition. They got a new province and they swallowed a small province called Orissa and another called Chota-Nagpur. But in the case of Muslims of East Bengal, it was nothing but a policy of "give, give, give." They got nothing out of the Partition. Why, because it was counted that they were loyal and contended. I say loyal we shall always be, but contended we shall not remain. And I am not quite sure whether we have remained very loyal either. I was entirely for the re-partition and also entirely for the change of Capital as well But the way in which it was done, was an absolute betrayal of the Mussalman cause. Thank God, we were betrayed and it opened our eyes and we found precisely what I once told the French people in Paris some time ago. I said to them : "Friends, you are an ally of England. If you could learn something from the experiences of Asiatics living very far from you, but who have had the experience of the underdog

which you have not yet, you should make your peace with the Germans directly. You will do it at much lesser cost than you can through the alliance of France with England." We realise in India that we could make our peace with you (*i.e.*, the Hindus) on much better terms and less sacrifice than we could have done with the help of the English. I pass over all this and the entire history of the Muslim League. and how it came to have for its ideal a self-government suited to India.

Its Reaction on Muslim Politics

While I declared in the *Comrade* that "in our judgment the Mussalmans should accept the decision of the Government," I could not but say that they had deserved a better fate. Before the Partition they had laboured under many difficulties and had endured everything quietly as only the weak can endure. It was not they that had clamoured and agitated for the Partition. Nevertheless, the Partition came to them as a well- deserved though wholly unexpected blessing. Their condition had begun to improve and with that their ambitions and hopes. It may even be confessed that, like all *noviaux riches,* these political *pervenus* sometimes held their heads too high and strutted about in the peacock manner. But, like the exaltation born of a draught of hashish, it did not last long, and the reaction came with a suddenness and a force that were terrible. The emancipated slaves were, so to speak, once more sold into bondage, and who does not know that revenge is sweet ? Their old masters could have been excused if on being placed once more in the position of the slave-driver they had used the lash and the bastinado a little too lavishly. The Mussalmans of Eastern Bengal had been made to fight the battle of their rulers against their neighbours, and now that it was no longer convenient for the rulers to continue the fight, they had made their own peace with all convenient speed, and had left the Musslmans to the mercy of these against whom they had been used as auxiliaries. It would be hard to discover in history a more ignoble instance of betrayal in which "loyalty" has been rewarded with deprivation of recently recovered rights, and "contentment" has been punished as the worst of crimes. Perhaps I may mention

without any indiscretion that when immediately after the Announcement I drove over in haste to interview Sir Charles Bayley, the head of the Local Government now thrown on the scrap-heap, I met Lord Sinha and Sir Benode Mitter, who asked me what I thought of the Announcement. I told them that in the case of the Hindus of Bengal the Announcement had been a matter of "give-and-take," that for "sturdy, loyal" Beharis it had been one of "take" only, but that for the Mussalmans of Eastern Bengal it had been one of the nothing but "give" and as a reward for their loyalty and contentment they had been given a generous helping of humble pie. And then I walked off with the mumbled prayer that they might be spared too acute an attack of indigestion ! In the Durbar itself a little earlier I remember that I had been accosted by my old friend Sir Charles Cleveland, Director of the Criminal Intelligence Department, as I was hastily perusing the Announcement. As it happened, I was among the very first in the Press Camp to receive a copy of it from the hands of the official who was distributing them. Sir Charles had humorously asked me if there was anything in the Announcement for me or for him, and I had replied with ill-suppressed bitterness that there was nothing for me, but that there was a plenty of work for him. And who can say that my prophecy has not proved true ?

Friends I have gone into this matter at considerable length only because the Announcement has always appeared to me to be a very distinct landmark in the political progress of the Mussalmans. Nothing could have more clearly convinced them that their dependence upon a foreign Government for support against sister communities laid them prepetually open to such betrayals. They now realised that they could place no reliance on such support, whether at home or abroad, and it set them thinking that perhaps at a much smaller sacrifice of their interests they could purchase lasting peace and even secure the friendship of their neighbours and fellow-countrymen.

Self-Government as the Muslim League's Creed

The Muslim League, although never an anti-Hindu or anti-Congress organisation, had at its birth in the very midst

of the Partition agitation, naturally emphasised in its creed the protection of communal interests and loyalty to Government, even though it had also included therein the promotion of harmony and concord with sister-communities. A year after the Durbar Announcement, the Council of the League recommended a change in the creed, and it emphasised in the new creed that it recommended "Self-government suitable for India" as its ideal. (This is about the charge of Muslim creed.) In commenting upon this charge, which was eventually accepted by the League in its annual session in the following March, I had stated that for the Mussalmans their new political creed was but "the half-way house from which their ultimate destination was clearly visible," and I do not think I can do better in helping you to form a just estimate of our position to-day than quote from the *Comrade* of that date the following passage which I would ask all Nationalists, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, to consider carefully :

"But it is not so much on the reform of the administration by the administrators and those to whom they are responsible, nor even on the relationship that comes to exist between the ruler and and the ruled that the attainment of self-govt depends. Self-government is the necessary corollary of self-realisation, and India as a whole has not yet realised herself. Once her conflicting interests, warring creeds and rival communities not only conceive that India can be one in her soul as she is in her body, but feel her unity as an individual feels the unity of his individual self inspite of the diversity of the various members and organs of his body, and the varying moods of his intellect and soul, there is no power in the world that can deny her self-government. But we would warn our countrymen against playing the sedulous ape in their methods of nation-making as we have warned them in the matter of their choosing their political goal......... In India, political unity can be achieved not so much by annihilating smaller units that may appear to conflict with the ultimate scheme of unity, but by recognising their force and inevitableness. If we could choose a motto for a society of nation-makers in India, we could suggest nothing better than

what the United States of America have adopted on their coins. India is to be a *pluribus unum*."

Mussalman and Foreign Affairs

In foreign affairs the year 1912 had opened with far different prospects from those of 1911. Up to the last, Indian Mussalmans had entertained the hope that things would right themselves. But this did not happen, and the year ended even worse than it had begun. The sad disillusionment with regard to international morality for which the shameless brigandage of Italy in Tripoli was responsible had greatly affected the Mussalmans in the autumn of 1911. If any further disillusionment was needed it was supplied by the action of Russia in Persia and Britain's "sanctimonious acquicesence.". In both cases the utmost brutality characterised European aggression. Who can forget the massacres in the Tripoli Oasis or the celebration in Persia of the New Year, which coincided with the anniversay of the Tragedy of Kerbala, when, among others, the Siquat-ul-Islam, the highest ecclesiastic of Nothern Persia—"a man universally respected alike for his learning, his piety and his tolerance"—was hanged by the Russians. If anything could surpass these things in the anguish they caused to Muslim minds, it was the threatened aeroplane attack on the Holy Ka'ba by Italy and the actual bombardment of Holy Meshad by Russia, which followed them. Truly did Mr. Shuster declare at a banquet given in his honour by the Persia Committee in London on his visit there after his expulsion from Persia : "I am not bitter about my own experience, but I should be a hypocrite if I pretended not to sympathise with the bitterness of the Mahomedan people who have so forcibly learned the lesson that the Ten Commandments do not apply to international politics. Let anyone who doubts this review the events of the past year." These bitter experiences were destined to be followed by those still more bitter in 1912 in the autumn of which broke out the Balkan War, which at one time threatened to expel the Turks from Europe after nearly five hundred years.

Reaction on Muslim Feeling in India

The attitude of England towards the enemies of Turkey, Persia and Morocco had begun to alienate the sympathies of Indian Mussalmans from England ever since 1911 ; and this estrangement could not but react on their relations with the British officials here, who, in spite of their detestation of the Radical politicians in power in England could not help looking askance at Indians daring to criticise an English Government with a candour and a courage unusual in a subject race. The *Comrade* case which for the first time brought home to Indians the power of the now defunct Press Act for evil, was concerned, as many of you may still remember, with the forfeiture of a pamphlet received from the Turks. In this they had only appealed to England for Christian succour against the Balkan Allies whose Macedonion atrocities were therein depicted. While this litigation was going on, the fatal developments following on the demolition of part of a small mosque at Cawnpore embittered Muslim feeling still further. In consequence of all this I had proceeded to England, in company with the then Secretary of the Muslim League, to appeal to the British Government and persuade it to alter a policy, Indian as well as foreign, that seemed to bode no good to anybody, and which was sure to drive the Muslims to despair. In this we partly succeeded ; but within a year events of far greater magnitude occurred in which the entire world was involved The War and the events leading to the participation of Turkey not on the same side as England undid all the good that we had expected to follow the freindly Deputation of Indian Mussalmans which we had taken to wait on Lord Hardinge earlier in the year, and which had been received by the Viceroy with every show of goodwill.

Outbreak of War and Muslim Feeling in India

When the war with Germany broke out, I think I fairly represented the feeling of educated and responsible Indian Mussalmans who were too self-respecting to play the sycophant when I wrote in the *Comrade* of the 12th August 1914, as follows :

"There are still some sane people among Indians themselves, and though they do not advertise the offer of their personal services to the Government, whatever influence they possess with the people would be used to decrease rather than increase the Government's embarrassment. They could offer no better guarantee than this that they regard India's connection with Great Britain as, at the present stage of India's growth, indispensable ; and we are sure that the less lofty motive of self-interest would wear better and stand the strain of circumstances longer than the lip-loyalty of Ji-Huzurs.

Whether Great Britain has respected Muslim Indian feeling in her dealings with Turkey, Persia, Morocco, or not ; whether the utterances of His Majesty's Ministers regarding the Turks in their life and death struggle during the last war have been just and consistent, or unjust and inconsistent ; whether their action following two breaches of treaty obligations, by Austria in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and by Italy in the Tripolitaine, have talied or not with the recent public proclamation of their sense of the sacredness of treaties ; whether their conscience has revolted or not at the slaughter of babes and sucklings, unprotected womanhood and bed-ridden age in Tripoli and the Balkans ; whether the white Colonials' treatment of their coloured fellow-citizens of the same Empire has been fair or otherwise ; whether the Home Government has exerted its full pressure on the Colonials to right the wrong, or has only assumed an incredible impotence ; whether Indian's claims for an equitable adjustment of rights and duties and for a fair share in guiding the destinies of their own country have been met by the British Bureaucracy in the spirit of freindliness, or of jealousy and rancour ; whether in the annulment of the Partition of Bengal, the Mussalmans were treated with due consideration for their loyalty, or it was under-rated and their contentment taken too much for granted ; whether the sanctity of their places of worship and the integrity of their graveyards have been uniformly respected, or sometimes lightly sacrified to the Moloch of Prestige— say that, irrespective of any or all of these considerations, or rather because we have carefully weighed them all against the one supreme consideration, our need of

England and her tutelage at the present stage of our national and communal growth, and found her good exceeding by a great deal her evil, we shall remain loyal to her as only freemen can remain loyal, with a sincere devotion and an unbought submission and this whether she crushes the naval power of Germany and becomes a dictator to Europe, or the last ship of her mighty Armada sinks in the North Sea and her last soldier falls down and dies round Liege or London...Even if England may not need us, we have need of her. Believing in political purity rather than in political prudery, we have entered the lists with her biggest bureaucrats in India in time of peace. But in time of war the clash of steel in civic battles must cease and the voice of controversy must be hushed, and if we cannot hastily command in others an enthusiasm for this war which we ourselves do not feel, let us once and for all assure the Government that, as far as we and those within the orbit of our influence are concerned, they can sleep in peace. Let alone Provincial satraps and the still greater despots of their districts, their meanest, if not their humblest, policeman will find us at his beck and call whenever civic excitement has to be allayed. More than this we cannot proclaim. Less than this we shall not confess. This is and has always been our creed and to that we shall adhere."

Freinds, I fear, I must have exhausted your patience with these long quotations from the *Comrade*, but I feel certain of your indulgence if you would only consider the object I have in view. This long narration is intended to show to the world how different were the feelings of Indian Mussalmans towards this Government until quite recent times, and what patience we had shown in the face of injustice, indifference and continued callousness.

Turkey and Indian Muslim Feeling

...At the suggestion of Government, and through its own medium, I had even cabled, along with my friend Dr. Ansari, to the late lamented Talaat Pasha urging the Turks to think a thousand times before they prticipated in the War. And even

when war was being forced on Turkey by ill-advised threats such as those of the London *Times*, my very long, well-known and in the English Press extensively quoted and highly opproved article, in reply to that of the *Times* on the "Choice of the Turks," had shown to what lengths Indian Mussalmans were then prepared to go in assisting their foreign Government.

I shall only quote to you the final conclusion at which after very careful and detailed reasoning I had myself arrived in that article, and which I had recommended to the Mussalmans for adoption as the policy of the community :

"All truly loyal people (I wrote) have closed the chapter of civic controversy with the officials and into that book they are likely to look no more. Whatever our grievances, whatever reforms we desire, everything must wait for a more reasonable occasion. Even if the Government were to concede to us all that we ever desired or dream ; if, for instance, the Muslim University were offered to us on our own terms, or the Press Act repeal were to be announced ; or even if Self-Government were to be conceded to us, we would humbly tell Government this is no time for it, and we must for the present decline such concession with thanks. Concessions are asked for and acccpted in peace. We are not Russian Poles. We need no bribes !"

A conclusion such as this had recommended itself even to the Calcutta correspondent of the *Morning Post*. And yet it was for publishing this very article that I forfeited the security of the *Comrade* Press and had in consequence to discontinue that paper. It was then that a distinguished weekly journal of England, *The New Statesmen*, severely criticised the Government of India in a leading article sarcastically headed 'Encourging Loyalty in India" ! And when the war with Turkey actually broke out, a representative of the *Associated Press* and *Reuter* interviewed me at Delhi and subsequently informed me that the interview was much appreciated by the Viceroy who had seen it before publication. I had predicted in the previous article that even if war broke out with the Truks, the anchor of the Indian Mussalman's loyalty would hold, and now that war had broken

out I repeated that the anchor still held. I asked them to commend their souls to God and to place their services at the disposal of the Government for the preservation of peace and tranquillity in India. I compared their position to that of the children of parents who had quarelled with one another. "Right may be on one side or the other, but the sorrow and suffering are inany case those of the children."

The Limits of Muslim "Loyalty"

In this interview, as also in the last leading article, the *Comrade* was permitted to publish before it closed, its doors it was clearly indicated that Mussalmans were placing implicit reliance on the solemn pledges given by the British Government and Britain's Allies with regard to their faith and the Holy Places of Islam. I had distinctly pointed out that *Arabia must not be attacked, nor must the protection of Islam's Holy Places by a really independent Muslim Power be endangered.* This was the least to which Indian Mussalmans were entitled unless their religion was required by their non-Muslim Government to be a matter of no consequence to them as compared with their "loyalty" to that Government. I may add that I had concluded my interview with the statement that the Muslims could be trusted to act on the precept of Jesus Christ to render unto Caesar what is due to Caesar. But I was informed by the distinguished journalist who had recorded the interview that the Censor of Press telegrams, who was no doubt a good Christian, while passing the rest of the message, had carefully scored out the exhortation of Jesus Christ. No doubt that astute official, who believed in the supremacy of the State over the Church, thought that if the Muslims were reminded of their duty to render unto Caesar what was due to Caesar, they might perchance remember the accompanying exhortation also to render unto God what was due to God !

Defiance of Muslim Religion and Disregard of Muslim Rights

This was precisely what happened before very long.

and the history of our betrayal is too recent to be repeated in any detail. During the War, Mussalmans were required, in defence of their religious obligations, to assist Government in waging war against the Khalifa and those engaged in Jihad. The Jazirat-ul-Arab, which includes Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, and which Mussalmans were required by their faith at all times to keep free from non-Muslim occupation and control, was attacked and occupied by Great Britain and her Allies, and is still under their control in defiance of their Prophet's well-known testamentary injunction. The Holy Places of Islam, *which are not particular buildings merely, but territories*, including the three Sacred Harams of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, have been filched from the Successor of the Prophet and Commander of the Faithful, who is their only accredited Servant and Warden, and even to-day he is not permitted to occupy, defend serve them. The dismemberment of the Empire of the Khalifa; the appointment of non-Muslim Mandatories to control various portions of it; and the consequent weakening of the temporal power of Islam to the point of danger to its spiritual influence, through the possible pressure of the temporal power of rival creeds, were openly advocated by the Allies, and none of them insisted upon this course so relentlessly up to the last as Great Britain herself. As we all know, Greece was her own brutal nominee and agent in the execution of this policy even after the armistice in defiance of all laws of peace or war, and howsoever much the other Allies also may have resisted Ismet Pasha at Lausanne, it was Great Britain herself that was the chief obstacle in the path of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha to the very end of this tragic tale. Discrimination was made against Muslim governments and populations in various other ways also, such as by the denial of self-determination to the Muslim populations of territories forcibly annexed or occupied and controlled by non-Muslim Powers. While all this was going on, Indian Muslim opinion unrepresented at the Peace Conference, and represented before the Allies themselves only by unrepresentative Mussalmans, was vigorously suppressed in India by means of those well-known engines of tyranny and terrorism: the Press Act, the Defence of India Act, Regulation III of 1818 and, finally, the declaration of Martial Law in parts of India, over

and above the abuse of the ordinary penal law of the land,

The Time Was Ripe For Re-union

I have already declared it as my view that the bitter experience of ill-will against the Muslim States and populations abroad hastened the conversion of the Mussalmans to the view that to rely on this foreign and non-Muslim Government for support and sympathy, even after making every conceivable sacrifice for its sake was futile and that if they were in need of support and sympathy they must have a lasting, equitable settlement with the sister communities of India. The same course was clearly indicated by the betrayal of the Mussalmans of Eastern Bengal. And the time too was ripe for a Hindu-Muslim re-union. True partnership and association, whether in business, social relationship or in love, requires that there should be no great disparity between those that are to associate together as partners, friends or lovers. The same is true of politics. The union of the rich and the poor, of the old and the young, of the learned and the ignorant, is perhaps possible but far from common; and it was a true instinct that guided Syed Ahmad Khan in opposing, a generation previously, the yoking together of the strong and the weak. During the controversy with regard to the Minto-Morley Reforms, however, Mussalmans had developed to some extent the quality of self-assertion so necessary in politics. But ever since the outbreak of the Tripolitan War they had to struggle against the repressive policy of the Government, and it is not with a view to praise my own community that I say it has now to a considerable extent made up the distance between itself and the more advanced communities of India by dint of forced marches which it had to undertake throughout this momentous period.

The Rapprochement

It was at my brother's suggestion and my own during our internment that in 1915 the Muslim League held its annual session at Bombay where the Congress was also to meet. Maulana Mazhar-ul-Haque, the veteran Congressman, who was neverthe-

less one of the founders of the Muslim League, and who had valiantly stuck to the Congress all these years in spite of the fact that the bulk of his community was still following the lead of Syed Ahmad Khan given thirty years ago, was now elected President of the Muslim League with great *eclat*. He was called upon to execute the mandate of his own community and bring about a joint meeting of the political leaders in the camps of the League and the Congress in order to adjust the future political relations of the various communities concerned. I hope Mr. Jinnah would soon come back to us soon. I may mention that an infidel becomes a Kaffir and a Kaffir becomes an infidel; likewise, when Mr. Jinnah was in the Congress I was not with him in those days, and when I was in the Congress and in the Muslim League he was away from me. I hope some day we would reconcile. Mr. Jinnah's persuasive advocacy was added to the vigour of the President, and last but not least, the audacious courage and vehement perseverance of that intrepid Muslim patriot, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, brought about the *rapprochement* which was to bear fruit in the following year on the historic Lucknow Compact. So rapid had been the progress of the Mussalmans that a mildewed critic from among their own community observed that Lord Sinha, the Bengali President of the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress, had travelled thither by the same train as his Behari neighbour and brother-lawyer who presided over the Muslim League, and the two had borrowed one another's Presidential Addresses in order to compare notes. By some unfortunate mistake, Lord Sinha read out the halting and hesitating address of the ever loyal Muslim while the ever loyal Muslim read out the piquant and pungent address of the ever disloyal Bengali. But, said the critic with more wit than wisdom the two Presidents forgot to take back their own productions, and by an irony of fate Maulana Mazhar-ul-Haque had read to his Muslim audience as his own the pungent oration characteristic of the Bengali, and Lord Sinha had done likewise and read to the Congress delegates the cautious and halting address of the "ever-loyal" Muslim.

Government had now come to realise what would be the

inevitable result of the Bombay *rapproachement*, and it is a matter of history how the Muslim-Leaguers were compelled to conclude *in camera* the session begun under such auspices. Thenceforward, the Congress and the Muslim League always met for their annual sessions at the same centre and worked in entire co-operation. The result was inevitable and could well have been foreseen. If the Congress President of the Ahmedabad Session was lodged in the Alipore gaol when he should have been occupying the Presidential Chair at Ahmedabad, the President of the Muslim League for the same year was indicted for waging war against the King at Ahmedabad itself on account of his Presidential address, and, even when acquitted by the unanimous verdict of the jury on that charge, was consigned to the Ahmedabad gaol after being convicted of sedition. It is a feather in the Muslim cap that while Srijut Das has brilliantly led the Swarajists to victory in Bengal and elsewhere, his Muslim *confrere* Maulana Hasrat Mohani is now sharing the honours of the Yerrowda gaol with Mahatma Gandhi, having in the meantime more than doubled his original sentence, in spite of the restricted opportunities for indulging in criminal practices that a prisoner's life affords, and has thus corrected the error of a blundering jury.

Muslim Realization of Larger Indian Interests

But it was not only a case of safeguarding Muslim communal interests without leaning for support eternally on foreign Government and harbouring suspicions against sister communities. Mussalmans would have been more than human, or less than that (means, less than human) if they had been indifferent to the continued injustice done to India and Indians collectively. Having been taught by their political preceptors in the past that Government could never for long leave a wrong unredressed, they had followed the policy of "wait and see." They had waited long, and yet all that they saw was a series of wrongs done to India—wrongs which remained unrepented and unredressed. Their patience was at last giving way and they were beginning to enlist as Congress members in annually increasing numbers. This was a hopeful indication of their

realizing—I hope they realise it even to-day—that they had to protect not only their comparatively petty communal interests but also the larger Indian national interests, which were surely theirs to protect as those of sister communities. They now realized more than ever that by being Muslims they could not cease to be Indians. The Congress sessions of Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi had progressively justified the National appellation of the Congress. But it was reserved for General Dyer to break down entirely the barrier that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had for temporary purposes erected more than thirty years previously, and to summon the Mussalmans of India to the Congress held at Amritsar in 1919 as the unsuspecting Herald of India's Nationhood. The bullets of his soldiery made no distinction between Hindu and Muslim, and clearly Providence had so designed things that a community even more loyal than the Mussalmans, namely, our brave Sikh brothers (*hear, hear*) should also die on the sacred soil of their religious capital at Amritsar with their own blood along with that of Hindu and Muslim martyrs. There is the Hand of God!

The Coming of the Mahatma

Much of the suffering undergone at Jallianwalla Bagh was, however, of a passive character, not invited nor cheerfully borne, of course, I exclude individual instances, and the terror that the proceedings of the administrators of Martial Law had created seemed at one time to have paralysed the people of the Punjab soon after they had discovered their national identity through common suffering. But the Punjab was not left to sorrow alone. More than one patriotic Indian proceeded to the Punjab; but I feel confident they themselves would be the first to admit that I do them no injustice when I declare that the most historic event that took place during those eventful days was the "Coming of the Mahatma!"

The Mahatma's story is too well-known to you all, and now happily to a good many well-informed people outside India also, for me to recapitulate it here. His experiences in South Africa had taught him and I hope it will teach us

even now and after so many years, to people like Mr. Sastri and Mr. Sapru that it was idle to expect justice for Indians overseas unless justice was done to Indians at home and India secured a government of her own. Gentlemen, I am not afraid here to proclaim to the world that, if necessary, I shall walk out of the British Empire. But I am not also ashamed of proclaiming to the same world that, if possible, I shall remain within the British Empire. This, of course, did not mean that the British connection must necessarily be broken; and even to-day not only be, whose forbearance is proverbial, but also followers of his like myself who cannot pretend to be equally forbearing, believe in spite of the bitter experiences of the last few years, that the truest Swaraj for India is not incompatible with the British connection if the British nation and the British Government only undergo a change of heart and make a *prayaschit* repentence for the past. It was no doubt to deliver India from her bonds, spiritual no less than political, that the Mahatma had returned to the Motherland.

But the methods that he himself believed in and inculcated to his fellow-countrymen were not those that would be called "political" in the politics-ridden West. To him, as to all great teachers of mankind, Life was a single synthesis, however much we might analyse it for the convenience of philosophical study, and there was no direct antithesis between the political and the spiritual.

Jesus and Israel: A Parallel Situation

Many have compared the Mahatma's teachings, and latterly his personal sufferings, to those of Jesus (on whom be peace); but the analogy goes farther than many have yet realised. Jesus was a Jew, and those who lovingly followed him acclaimed him as the Messiah of the House of David who had come to restore to the Israelites their long lost independence and power. Just as the "Tragedy of History" had been illustrated by the doom required by long-gathering guilt in the case of the Ten Tribes of the kingdom of Samaria, who were crushed and practically annihilated or dispersed by Assyria more than

seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, so was it illustrated again a century and a quarter later in the case of their no less guilty brothers of Judah when Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian, destroyed the Temple of Solomon, razed Jerusalem to the ground, and, making the Jews his captives, carried them into exile.

Ever since then the Israelites had dreamt dreams of revenge and restoration, and the victory of Cyrus seemed at one time to realise all that had been hoped. The re-building of the Temple had commenced, and after a temporary suspension resumed. Zerubbabel who was of the line of David, was the hope of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, who looked forward to the political regeneration of the Jews, consequent on the overthrow and destruction of "the kingdoms of the nations." The line of David was hoped to be restored in the person of Zerubbabel himself, and the Messianic predictions of earlier prophets thus fulfilled. This prediction was, however, not fulfilled at the time, and whatever became of Zerubbabel, who disappears with the coronation scene in Zechariab, he never wore a real crown nor sat upon the throne of his fathers.

Israel was destined never more to taste the sweets of independence; but whether under the yoke of Greeks or of Romans, Israel never lost the hope of restoration. This is something for men like the Maharajah of Alwar to ponder over.

"The triumphal and often cruel entry of Greek and Roman civilization into Asia threw it back upon its dreams. More than ever it invoked the Messiah as judge and avenger of the people. A complete renovation, a revolution which would shake the world to its very foundations, was necessary in order to satisfy the enormous thirst for vengeance excited in it by the sense of its superiority and by the sight of its humiliation."—(Renan).

Herod the Great who had contrived to secure some semblance of independence from Rome had died about the year in which Jesus was born, and "his three sons were only lieutenants

of Romans, analogous to the Rajas of India under the English dominion".—(Renan). When during the childhood of Jesus, Archelaus, its ethnarch, was deposed by Augustus, the last trace of self-government was lost to Jerusalem. Judea was thenceforward part of a dependency of the province of Syria, which was governed by an imperial legate. A series of Roman procurators, subordinate in important matters to the imperial legate of Syria, of whom Pontius Pilate is so well known to Christian history, were constantly occupied in extinguishing the volcano which was seething beneath their feet. Continual sedition, excited by the zealots of Mosaism did not cease, in fact, to agitate Jerusalem during all this time. To cast down the Roman eagle, and destroy the works of arts raised by the Herods, in which the Mosaic regulations were not always respected, were perpetual temptations to fanatics who had reached that degree of exaltation which removed all care for life. The Samaritans were agitated by movements of a similar nature. The "Zelotes" or "Sicarii", pious assassins who imposed on themselves the task of killing whoever in their estimation broke the Law, began to appear. A movement which had much more influence upon Jesus was that of Judas, the Gaulonite, or Galilean. The Census which was the basis of taxation by the foreigner was hated as almost an impiety. That ordered in the sixth year of the Christian era had fully re-awakened the theocratic abhorrence of Gentile government and had caused a great fermentation. In fact, an insurrection had broken out in the Northern provinces from which the greatest achievements of the Jewish people had always proceeded.

"Men deemed themselves on the eve of the great renovation, the Scriptures, tortured into diverse meanings fostered the most colossal hopes. In each line of the writings of the Old Testament they saw the assurance, and in a manner the programme, of the future reign, which was to bring peace to the righteous, and to seal for ever the work of God".—(Renan).

The Moral Revolution of Jesus

When Jesus contemplated the world at the outset of his

ministry he was called upon to make his choice of the weapons of reform. The conditions of his people and his times, as I think, rather than any fundamental objection to the use of force in all circumstances, as Christian churchmen profess, made him pin his faith to non-resistance of evil. In other words, he decided to defeat force by his own suffering just as Husain subsequently did at Karbala, although the latter died sword in hand. But whatever view we may take of the choice of Jesus, it is certain that his fundamental idea was different from that of the political reformers of his time such as Judas the Gaulonite, whose example had shown him the futility of the popular seditions of his day. If ever he was the author of the disclaimer: "My kingdom is not of this world," he must have recant that he was not setting out to defeat Satan "the Prince of this world" with the help of Satanic weapons. He was not "worldly" in his methods; but this does not mean that he was "otherworldly." All that it signifies is that he was "unworldly." Having resisted the temptation to be a political revolutionary on the very threshold of his career as a Teacher, he never succumbed to it. The revolution he wished to effect was a moral revolution, and although he did not escape the fate of "rebels," and was placed on the Cross by order of Pilate with the description "King of the Jews," which is, in spite of its intended irony, significant of the Roman Procurator's political suspicions, Liberty for him meant in the first instance Truth and Self-Purification. Renan was, to my mind, a typical Frenchman of his times for whom the claims of the State were paramount, and he could neither understand nor appreciate the thorough-going theocracy of Jesus, the "Servant of the Lord." Nevertheless, I agree with him in the conclusion that "as an austere republican or a zealous patriot he would not have arrested the great current of the affairs of his age; but in declaring that politics are insignificant, he has revealed to the world that one's country is not everything, and that the man is before, and higher than, the citizen." Vengeance which was consuming the Israelities was the Lord's. Jesus counselled the upholders of the *ex-talionis* who claimed an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth that he who had been smitten on one cheek should turn the other cheek also to the smiter. So much for the

foreign tyrant. As for his own countryman, and, I hope my own no-change friends would remember this also. The Jew, who, falling a victim to his own weakness and a fear of the Gentile masters of Judea, had become a publican or tax-collector on behalf of the foreigner, he too could easily claim a share in the abounding love of Jesus. The idea of being all powerful by suffering and resignation, and of triumphing over force by purity of heart, is as old as the days of Abel and Cain, the first progeny of Man. But since it so eminently suited the conditions of the times of Jesus, and the record of his ministry, however inadequate or defective, are still preserved for us this part of his teachings in some detail, it has come to be regarded by Christians and even by many non-Christians as an idea peculiar to Jesus.

Jesus and Gandhi

Be that as it may, it was just as peculiar to Mahatma Gandhi also; but it was reserved for a Christian government to treat as felon the most Christ-like man of our times and to penalise as a disturber of the public peace the one man engaged in public affairs who comes nearest to the Prince of Peace. The political conditions of India just before the advent of the Mahatma resembled those of Judea on the eve of the advent of Jesus, and the prescription that he offered to those in search of a remedy for the ills of India was the same that Jesus had dispensed before in Judea Self-purification through suffering; a moral preparation for the responsibilities of government; self-discipline as the condition precedent of Swaraj—this was Mahatma's creed and conviction; and those of us who have been privileged to have lived in the glorious year that culminated in the Congress session at Ahmedabad have seen what a remarkable and what a rapid change he wrought in the thoughts, feelings and actions of such large messes of mankind.

The Mahatma and Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi had been in direct touch with the Indian Government, had often counselled the Viceroy, and had continued his assistance to the British Government in its hour

of need in South Africa by working as the unpaid recruiting sergeant of that Government of India. This had indeed amazed those who could not associate him whose life itself was a Sermon on the Mount with recruitment of blood-spilling soldiers. Yet even so loyal a subject and so staunch a friend was compelled to oppose a measure of that Government which no one reading British declarations of gratitude for India's loyalty in the early stages of the War could have conceived as the possible culmination of that gratitude at the end of that War. A Reform Scheme was under consideration professedly for enlarging the Indian's share in Indian administration. But while one hand was declared to be about to give a wider franchise to India, the other was already busy robbing her even of her narrowly-restricted liberties. This is what my brother and I wrote to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, from one internment at Chhindwara on the 24th April, 1919, when we were about to court imprisonment by breaking the Defence of India Regulations which had curtailed our liberties four years previously.

"The war is now over, but the spirit of tyranny that it generated is still abroad; and while, on the one hand, it is being proclaimed in high-sounding phrases that those who are assembled at Paris to decide the destinies of the world on a more equitable and humane basis than brute force are not the masters of the people, but their servants, the Government, on the other hand, is denying to the people of India the barest expression on questions that vitally concern them. Not only is the gag not to be removed yet from our own mouths, but a gag of prodigious proportions has been prepared now for ailencing more than three hundred millions of God's articulate creatures. The Rowlatt Bill just enacted in the most tyrannical manner has ended the reign of law and substituted a reign of terror in its place, and although it affects every section of the people of India, the Mussalmans are certain to be its first and its worst victims. It has been the Muslim Press that has suffered most under the Press Act, and the same has been true of the Defence of India Act, if we only exclude this unfortunate young men of Bengal rotting in solitary cells or swampy

islands, without trial or hope of release. Even those who profess a pathetic optimism and hope against hope that the bureaucracy armed with the strength of the giant will not use it as tyrannically as the giant, need only have access to our own experience to be cured of this distressing decision. We, who have already had enough experience of "executive discretion" and of "investigating authorities" sitting *in camera*, farcically enquiring into undefined charges, and dealing with undisclosed "evidence" without the help of any code of procedure or law of evidence, submitting reports that cannot bear the light of day, and being finally dismissed as ignorant persons for all their pains, can claim to speak with some authority, and say that the Black Act is nothing more or less than the virtual outlawry of a fifth of mankind."

It was our privilege to point out to Mahatma Gandhi the real import and full scope of the Rowlatt Bills, soon after he commenced his famous Stayagraha campaign. This was the first dawn of the era of Non-Co-operation. The occurrences at Delhi, Amritsar and Lahore, and in Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat are matters of history, and although the Mahatma's admission of his "Himalayan error" has been proclaimed to the world by the Government, and the official and unofficial scribes who have been enlisted in its support, none seems to have had the honesty to admit that the Mahatma's blunder would have overtopped Everest if he had not then united his nation as he did in defence of its liberties. At the very worst the "Himalayan error" consisted in miscalculating the extent of the people's discipline and self-restraint. But if Mahatma Gandhi had left the Rowlatt Bills unchallenged, he would have been guilty of a sin of which he could hardly have purged himself by any kind of expiation. Place all the violence of the infuriated mobs on one side, and on the other side place the cowardliness of a surrender to the slavery sought to be imposed on the nation by these Bills, and, in spite of my utter abhorrence of such violence, I say with all deliberateness that on the Day of Judgment I would rather stand before God's White Throne guilty of all this violence than have to answer for the unspeakable sin of so cowardly a

surrender. In saying this I am only applying to the situation four years earlier my chief's own admission in the court of the Judge who has ordered that for six years he should "be buried alive." "I knew," admitted the Mahatma, "that I was playing with fire." But he also added : "I ran the risk, and if I was set free I would still do the same"! If I am set free I am going to do the same. Christ-like in his methods he has been Christ-like to the end. He had "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," and not even the prospect of the Cross could make him shrink from treading the path of duty. Now, I come to the very interesting part with regard to non-violence.

Non-Violence

I would like to re-state here the position of men like myself with regard to non-violence. I am not a Christian believing in the sinfulness of all resistance to evil, and in their practice, even if not in their theory, the vast bulk of Christians and all Christian States are in full agreement with me. The last German War illustrated this. The German War was not won with non-violence. The last War presented an excellent opportunity to these States and to Christians at large to demonstrate their belief in the doctrine of non-resistance, but we know that none of the States followed it, and the few Christians whose practice was not divorced from their professions were the "conscientious objectors" contemptuously called "conchies" who were subjected to ridicule and contumely and were punished like felons. But that was not all. Every national Church blessed the national Flag and sent the national warriors as on a Crusade. As a Mussalman and a follower of the Last of the Prophets (on whom be Allah's blessings and peace!). I believe that war is a great evil; but I also believe that there are worse things than war. "There is no compulsion in faith," says the Quran, and if any of my Moplah comes to you, please tell him that, my friends, because force and religious conviction have no common denominator. They belong to two very different planes But when war is forced on a Muslim, and the party does so has no other argument but this, then, as a Mussalman and the follower of the Last of Prophets, I may not shrink, but

must give the enemy battle on his own ground and beat him with his own weapons. This is my own creed. If he respects no other argument than force and would use it against me, I would defend my Faith against his onslaught and would use against him all the force I could command—force without stint and without cessation. But when, in the language of the Quran: "War hath dropped her weapons," my sword must also be sheathed. Warfare, according to the Quran, is an evil; but persecution is a worse evil, and may be put down with the weapons of war. When persecution ceases, and every man is free to act with the sole motive of securing divine goodwill, warfare must cease. These are the limits of violence in Islam, as I understand it, and I cannot go beyond these limits without infringing the Law of God. I would recall this to my Hindu friends, particularly those at Allahabad. A little before our incarceration, I was addressing the District Conference at Allahabad, where there were many Hindu critics of mine—not in the conference itself, but in the newspaper, called *Leader*—and the group of politicians of which Mr. Chintamani was one of the distinguished members. I said: "You are always asking me questions about the Afghanistan bogey, my creed about violence and so forth. Friends, I ask you for once to trust me and believe me." During this last war, I was interned and confined as a State prisoner and I saw my Mussalman countryman going to war to fight against his Mussalman brothers, to despoil the Holy Land and give it to the infidel and, in short, to fight against his own creed and conscience. They had not the courage to utter one word, and when they did utter, they were confined as State prisoners, interned or sent to jail. Newspaper securities were confiscated and there was utter demoralisation of my community. I have shed bitter tears. I have passed through fire. It is through my own sufferings that I have realised what your sufferings would be, if you were persecuted in your faith. This is the best guarantee I can give—that, because I respect my freedom of faith, I am bound to respect yours. As I said once, I did not know where India was. Vasco de Gama discovered the route to India by rounding the Cape of Good Hope. I discovered the route to India by rounding Mecca, Medina, Constantinople, Sufiz etc. At last the

thing was driven home to me. And do you think it is possible for you, for any living creature of God, not to go through the same fires through which we went in these eventful years? That is the only guarantee I offer to you. Even to-morrow if India is to have Mussalman rule, I can never think of persecuting, and I do not think any one who has gone through those terrible years would think of persecuting a Hindu for his religion. But I have agreed to work with Mahatma Gandhi, and our compact is that as long as I am associated with him, I shall not resort to the use of force even for purposes of self-defence. And I tell you why. And I have willingly entered into this compact because I think we can achieve victory without violence; that the use of violence for a nation of three hundred and twenty millions of people should be a matter of reproach to it; and, finally, this is my third reason, that victory achieved with violence must be not the victory of all sections of the nation, but mainly of the fighting classes, which are more sharply divided in India from the rest of the nation than perhaps anywhere else in the world, even though our general is a Banya. Our Swaraj must be the Sarvaraj, the Raj of all, and, in order to be that, it must have been won through the willing sacrifice of all. If this is not so, we shall have to depend for its maintenance as well on the prowess of the fighting classes, and this we must not do. Swaraj must be won by the minimum sacrifice of the maximum number, and not by the maximum sacrifice of the minimum number. Since I have full faith in the possibilities of the programme of constructive work of Non-violent Non-Co-operation, I have no need to hanker after violence. I do not even hanker after the Councils. Even if this programme fails to give us victory, I know that suffering willingly and cheerfully undergone will prove to have been the best preparation even for the effective use of force. This is not the reason why I am doing it. Suppose we dissociate ourselves from Mahatma, and tread upon violence, even then, this appreciation for force is necessary. But, God willing, the constructive programme will not fail us if we work with a will and accustom the nation to undergo the small sacrifices that it entails.

What Swaraj Demands from the Nation

Here I may ask those of my fellow-countrymen who shrink even from these small sacrifices whether they have considered what it is that a soldier, a common soldier on rupees 15, who goes to battle is prepared to sacrifice. As the Bible tells us: "Greater love hath no man...than, that he lay down his life for his friend." Our own compatriots went to war for a cause not their own to the number of a million and a half. Can we who pride ourselves on the strength of our national feeling shrink even from the small sacrifices that Non-violent Non-Co-operation demands? But in reality our present programme is but the beginning of national work, and Swaraj when it is attained would require even greater sacrifices than those of a soldier. To die for a cause is after all not so very difficult. Men at all times and in all countries have done it, and they have often done it for very poor causes, whereas the last German war is not a very poor cause! To die for a cause is not very difficult. The harder thing is to live for a cause, and, if need be, suffer for it, and the cause that we must live and suffer for must be the realisation in India of the Kingdom of God.

Violence of Non-Co-Operators and their Opponents Contrasted

These being my innermost convictions, I cannot help marvelling at the audacity of those that attribute to us a desire to involve the country in violence, carnage and anarchy. There, your Rushbrook Williams! They presume to demand from us who stand between them and violence an assurance of non-violence. And yet their own hands are red with the blood of the innocents shed in Jallianwalla Bagh—blood still as unrepented as it is unavenged. When the District Magistrate arrested me at Waltair, he took me to a small place where the police armoury was kept, and then he said: "I require from you security for good behaviour and for keeping peace." You know what I said in reply? I said: "I want one from you. You require security from me to keep public peace. I am actually keeping public peace, and it is you that are disturbing it." We will make

them repeat it. Contrast this patent insincerity with the frank acceptance by your chief of his full responsibility for Chauri-Chaura and the Bombay riots and you have the measure of the moral worth of Non-Co-operation and of its relentless opponents The Mahatma's confession is proclaimed to the world by the Christian Government; but I wonder if this Government is also prepared to attribute to the Sermon on the Mount the slicing off by St. Peter of the ear of Malches! Peter chopped off the ear of one Malches when Christ was about to be arrested. Was the Sermon on the Mount responsible for this bloodshed? After all we are all human beings, and not angels! Who knows how much blood might not have been shed by the disciples of the Prince of Peace if the census of arms taken by the Master had produced a tale of many more than two swords and had his followers been more steadfast in their support of him than the self-same St. Peter who, according to the Gospels, denied him three times before cock-crow? We have not denied the Mahatma! When the guilt of Chauri-Chaura and similar unfortunate occurrences is being judged, it is necessary to take into consideration not only that which was done but also that which had been resisted. Never before in the annals of India have the people felt as intensely as they have done since the dawn of Non-Cooperation; did the people feel before, one-tenth as people of to-day? Even in those days when people like Mr. Gokhale led the country, did they feel so intensely as now? I have great veneration, I have great respect for Mr. Gokhale: I have the highest veneration for him: but he is not on the same plane as Mahatma Gandhi! and the marvel is not that the fury of the mob has resulted in so much bloodshed blood still as unrepented...... but we make them repentant but that the manhood of India has been successfully revived with so little of it. I challenge any one to show another instance in the history of mankind where hundreds of millions of people have been roused to stand up for their liberties and have remained so peaceful as the people of India led by Mahatma Gandhi. There is no country of Europe, with all its cold, frog blood, that would not have experienced a deluge of blood in like circumstances. That India has escaped such a deluge is due to Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers. See the great martyrs in the Jallianwalla

Bagh. See how our brave Sikh brothers who are a noble martial race have fully imbibed the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and how to-day they are showing us an example of courageous and quiet suffering. Is there in the whole of the West anything like the sufferings of the Sikhs at Gurukabagh? They talk of Babbar Akalis. But there are only half a dozen of them and they have been trying to chase them from post to post, and are not able to catch them. I believe they are only half a dozen. I have heard a story that there is a community in the Sikhs who are not for this kind of purification that the Mahatma preaches. They don't give up their wine and other evils; they won't give up crime and violence. One night about 5 or 6 of them went with a fortnight's rations to Gurukabagh where these poor starving people were remaining. As they were walking towards the place where these poor starving people were, the Police Superintendent who was on duty came out and said: "Go back, you, get back." One of these Akalis brought out a five chambered revolver and put it near the head of the Police Superintendent, and pointing it to him said: "Although I am a Sikh, I am an Akali". Then the Superintendent said: "March on." The fortnight's rations were delivered and then he marched back. But they have been playing the easy game. If we really have resorted to violence, as my brother says, there is no better leader of guerilla warfare than Mahatma Gandhi himself. Great as non-violence is, if he took to violence his greatness is still there.

Co-operation

In dealing with the question of Non-violence I have digressed and anticipated a good deal, and I must now revert to my narrative. I will only remind you,—even as recently as four years ago, there was tremendous delay at the Amritsar Congress on account of a quarrel, on account of a division, of which, I am sorry to say, Desabandhu Das was a party. And who was the other party? The Mahatma himself. Why? Because he could not be reconciled, he was for co-operation and my friend, Desabandhu Das who is very true to his principles was for non-co-operation. But he was for obstruction. Mr.

Tilak was supporting Mr. Das and as you can very well guess, Pandit Malaviya was supporting Mahatma Gandhi. When I had arrived on the scene I was a tyro to my brother. The activities of my brother and myself were a worthy record. As the Bible says: "Blessed are the peace-makers." But I do not know now if we had any blessings yet. On that occasion we came to a compromise at last that we should try and use the Reforms as far as possible for the good of India, and if it was not possible, we should not use them at all. The Mahatma agreed to this. I only wanted to show you how recent it is that the Mahatma has become a non-co-operator. He was a much later convert than we ourselves, even this violent brother who is 7 feet by 5 feet. No matter how much he may talk of non-violence, the very looks of the man betray him. His bulk comes under section 121. Whatever may be in his soul, I am not quite sure that he has a soul,—but the body he possesses is nothing else but the whole of the Indian Penal Code rolled under one section. And yet, time after time, my big brother and myself told Mahatma Gandhi that he was going too far in his mistrust of the English, and he said in reply: "Well, Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali, you must remember that I am only a recent convert and the zeal of a recent convert is always greater than that of those who are older in the faith—greater than the Assyrians." Up to the last minute, he was for co-operation with the Government, but when the time came when he could no longer co-operate with this Government, he non-co-operated with the Government. At the Congress at Amritsar the main resolution was concerned with the Reforms, and although only four years have passed since that session, it would surprise not a few to know that in the discussions over this resolution my friend Deshabandhu Das, the leader of the Council-entry party, and my late chief, Lokamanya Tilak, were entirely opposed to co-operation and the working of the Reformed Councils while Mahatma Gandhi had himself moved an amendment to that resolution. This was designed to commit the Congress to the principle of the co-operation of the people with the authorities in working the Reforms in response to the sentiments expressed in the Royal Proclamation. Neither side was willing to give way, and, as is usual on such occasions, the

protracted discussions in the Subjects Committee were delaying the discussions in the Congress and prolonging the session. This was the first occasion, as I have already told you, on which I took part in the Congress, and for a novice my own contribution is not altogether undeserving of notice. My brother and I tried to discover a formula which could be acceptable both to Mahatma Gandhi and to Lokamanya Tilak and Deshabandhu Das. We at last succeeded in this effort, and Srijut Bepin Chandra Pal moved, and I seconded, an amendment recommending to the Congress that "the provisions of the Reforms Act be used, as far as possible, with a view to secure full Responsible Government at an early date." This cleared the air, and finally both parties agreed to support a resolution declaring that "the Congress trusts that, so far as may be possible, the people will so work the Reforms as to secure an early establishment of full Responsible Government." It was with this addition that the Congress passed the resolution moved by Deshabandhu Das and seconded by Lokamanya Tilak, which declared India to be fit at the moment for full Responsible Government, characterised the Reforms Act as inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing and urged that Parliament should take early steps to establish full Responsible Government in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination. I have recalled these details only to show that even at Amritsar, Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers were willing to co-operate with Government so far as was possible. And yet otherwise so entirely changed was the atmosphere at this session of the Congress that after my long separation from my people I could not help being greatly impressed by the change. The Hindus and Mussalmans were no longer enemies or even rivals, but were comrades and brothers in arms. There was no longer a plethora of set speeches suggestive of mid-night oil, "full of sound and fury signifying nothing." There was a new earnestness which indicated that the resolutions of the Congress were resolutions indeed, in the sense that the nation was *resolved* to act. And above all, it was clear that fear of fellow-man was no longer to be the compelling motive in India, and that the only fear this land would know in future would be the fear of God. So struck was I by this amazing change that I quoted in my speech at

Amritsar the couplet of a fellow-townsman of mine who had said:

"One round of the wine cup was like a century long cycle of Time; when we left the tavern we found that the whole world had changed."

From Co-Operation to Non-Co-Operation

But so far it was only a change in the character and outlook of the people. Their policy was, however, also destined to undergo an entire sea-change. And it was Mahatma Gandhi who at Amritsar was insisting on the people's co-operation with the authorities that was destined to be the first and, in the beginning, almost the sole advocate of Non-co-operation. What was it that had wrought this change of policy? I must confess my feelings towards this Government which had undergone a complete change during the War, and in particular since the Armistice towards the end of 1918. When now I read in the old files of the *Comrade* the publicly expressed expectations I had entertained from this Government not only at the commencement of the year 1911, but even as late as the end of 1914, it appears as if I was examining the newly discovered bones of an animal now altogether extinct. It is true that as late as in December, 1919, I had taken with regard to co-operation with the authorities, a middle position between Mahatma Gandhi on the one side, and Deshabandhu Das and Lokamanya Tilak on the other which eventually became the position of the entire Congress. But I was even then not very hopeful of the possibility of such co-operation. I had seen only too clearly to what the co-operation of the Mussalmans with the authorities had led them. And I had likewise realised that what had happened at Jallianwalla Bagh, in the Crawling Lane, and at the Dak-Bungalow at Manianwalla was not a succession of unconnected incidents in which the thoughtless fury of the officials had suddenly vented itself, but a series of acts symptomatic of the disease from which this foreign bureaucracy was inevitably suffering. I was thoroughly convinced that this disease was congenital with the system, and if the system continued such

incidents were bound to recur, and Government would inevitably be a succession of Jallianwalla Baghs unless the British underwent a complete change of heart. The Duke of Connaught, when he came out to India in the beginning of 1921 to open the Reformed Legislatures, appealed to us to forget and forgive. I was, and still am, prepared to forgive; but forget I could not, and would not. To forget only means for the awakened sleeper to go back to sleep and to dream the pleasant dream he had been dreaming before he had awakened to the stern reality. But Mahatma Gandhi was not yet convinced of all this, and his conversion came a little later. For many months after the Amritsar session he continued to live in the hope that England would yet repent, and, while restoring the integrity and independence of the Khilafat, and evacuating the Jazirat-ul-Arab, England would redress the great wrong done to the people of the Punjab. In fact, it was not a mere hope that sustained him but an absolute conviction. and when he too was a last disillusioned, and would indicate in the process of preparing the programme of his constructive work a profound and thorough-going want of belief in the good intentions of England so that even we would suggest that perhaps he was going too far, he used to explain this by saying that he was a more recent, and therefore a more zealous, convert. When the last Petition that Muslim India addressed to England, through the Indian Khilafat Delegation in the interview that we had with the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, the ex-Premier of England, proved the utter futility of such appeals; and when the Punjab wrong was treated as an "error of judgment" to be rewarded by a pension paid out of India's poverty to the murderer of her innocent sons, and to the cold-blooded approver of this "error" who, enjoying the safety of a Government House surrounded by armed guards, had not even the justification of General Dyer, then Mahatma Gandhi lost all faith in co-operation between the rulers and the ruled.

Non-Co-Operation

Much has been said and written about Non-Cooperation and, if our opponents, or even some of our friends, would not

understand its significance even now, I cannot hope to enlighten them in this address. I will, therefore, content myself with saying that briefly it means that if we may not resist evil, at least we will not assist it. It is true we expect that if the Indian nation is prepared to make such sacrifices as Non-co-operation entails, this foreign Government would be absolutely paralysed. But although we do contemplate such a result, it is little more than incidental. Our movement, even though its name suggests that it is of a negative character, is in reality not so. It is essentially of a much more positive character. It does not directly aim at the paralysis of others; its direct aim is to remove our own paralysis. (Hear, hear.) We destroy schools and Colleges; but we build better ones where they teach us to fear God while they at present teach us only to fear man. We destroy Courts and set up Panchayats. And, if we destroy their Councils either by going in or remaining outside, we at least construct the Parliament of the Nation, called the Indian National Congress.

Every item of the Non-Co-operation programme, with which I shall presently have to deal, has a strong constructive as well as a destructive side, and we shall stand or fall according as we succeed in our construction or not, mere destruction will not do. But if we do not destroy, or, in other words, if we continue to avail ourselves of all that the Government has constructed, for the continuance of its own existence, and as a trap for our destruction, we shall neither stand nor even fall, but shall absolutely cease to exist. Even if our direct aim was to paralyse the Government it was entirely compatible with the purest ethics, and even with the doctrine of Love associated with the name of Jesus Christ and now of Mahatma Gandhi. And I maintain that such a paralysis of Government is clearly possible. Friends, very early in my career as a gaol-bird I was struck with the system of co-operation followed in Indian gaols. Every prisoner gets a remission of a few days at the end of every month for "a clean bill of health" during the month; but some of the prisoners who succeed in winning the confidence and favour of the local gaol authorities are made watchmen, convict-overseers or convict-warders, and, besides enjoying other

privileges during the rest of their prison life, they earn a more liberal remission of their sentence every month. Every one in this Pandal who has passed through that gateway of freedom called prison—and, I trust, there are a good many present here to-day—is familiar with the work of the convict-overseers and warders who share the duty of keeping watch and ward during the night with the paid warders employed by the gaol administration. As a rule the few paid warders pass the night enjoying tolerably sound sleep, or, at the very worst, doze out their period of sentinel. But at the end of every half hour the gaol resounds with the cries of the prisoners who keep the real watch and ward. "All's well!" is repeated from every corner of the gaol, and so long as this continues the paid warders can sleep the sleep of the just. And, this, my friends, is the parable of co-operation. We have lost our liberties and are kept enchained through the services of others who are as much deprived of their liberties as we ourselves, except for a few petty privileges that they seem to enjoy. Yes, in Knighthood, now for instance, Sapru's! Meanwhile the few foreigners who keep us in servitude can enjoy sleep and repose because the co-sharers of our servitude repeat from time to time from every corner of India's vast Bastille the reassuring cry, "All is well." The only difference is that whereas the convict-watchmen, overseers and warders can in this way at least secure their release from prison a little before their fellow-prisoners over whom they keep watch and ward, our co-operating friends, who are our comrades in slavery cannot look forward even to an earlier release. In fact, they have lost even the sense of slavery, and slavishly hug the very chains that keep them enslaved. As I wrote in the prison itself:

"Leave off worrying for me, O, heedless fool; weep over thine own captivity; that which thou deemest to be an ornament is nothing less than a chain."

A Question For Mussalmans

Friends, I feel certain, I have exhausted you as well as myself with this somewhat exhaustive historical narrative. commencing with the Indian Mutiny and coming down to our

own era of Non-Co-operation. But in thus narrating past history I had an end in view. I cannot act the part of a dictator to any of you; and yet I want you to co-operate with me and not with my enemies. Possessing no such personality as the Mahatma's and being as unwilling to bind a spell over you as I am incapable of doing it, I could only lead you to the conclusions which after half a life time of blindness and much blundering I have at last reached by demonstrating to you that our safest guide, the experience of several generations, inevitiably leads us to the same. Experience must be our our most cherished trophy, for it is a trophy made up of weapons that have hurt us. And here I appeal to the experience of my co-religionists in particular who are being diligently diverted from the path to which their history during the last sixty years and more has guided them. Granted that Non-Co-Operation has failed, and that co-operation with our non-Muslim fellow-countrymen is a vain hope, a snare and a delusion—though I am far from granting it except for argument's sake. Still we have got to suggest an alternative policy. I ask them not to accept my lead but to kick me out and to be in their turn my guide themselves. Whither could they lead me, that is now the question! If Non-Co-operation with our foreign masters and co-operation with Indian fellow-slaves of other faiths is not possible, what is the alternative that they have to place before us to-day? Are we to "progress backwards" till we begin to walk on all fours? Shall we co-operate with our foreign rulers and fight with our non-Muslim countrymen as we used to fight before? And if we do that what hope have we of any better results than we achieved for ourselves in the settlements after the Tripoli and the Balkan Wars, or, nearer home, in the unsettlement of a "settled fact" in Bengal? No, friends, that book is closed and into it we shall look no more. You have no alternative better than Non-Co-operation with the foreigner and co-operation with our neighbours, nor have I. And it is futile to waste our time in worrying over the impossible.

Mr. Montagu's Resignation and its Significance

It is said that we can have no grievance now after the Treaty

of Lausanne. You, friends, are in a better position to know how that Treaty came to be concluded than I who had to undergo for a year and a half solitary confinement in all but a technical sense, and have not been in touch with public affairs. But I have studied in some of the back numbers of the newspapers of those days something of what transpired in connection with the revision of the Treaty of Sevres while I was still in prison. You all know about the historic telegram despatched to the Secretary of State by the Government of India after consulting and receiving the general concurrence of the Local Governments, including their Ministers. You will agree that it fell far short not only of Muslim aspirations and sentiments, but also of the requirements of Islamic Law, since it did not say anything about the evacuation of the Jazirat-ul-Arab, and only recommended the Sultan's suzerainty over the Holy Places. In fact, the Government of India undoubtedly, even if haltingly, admitted all this when they said :- "We are conscious that it may be impossible to satisfy India's expectations in their entirety," though Mr. Chamberlain had the impudence to say that "the terms far exceeded even the demands of the warmest friends of the Turks." And yet what a storm did the world witness over the publication of even such a telegram. The Secretary of State's resignation was demanded by the Premier, and the King Emperor "had been pleased to approve its acceptance." In other words, Mr. Montagu was ignominiously dismissed. As *Reuter* pointed out, "Mr. Chamberlain's announcement in the House of Commons was received with fierce welcoming cheers from the majority of the Unionists; and the 'Die-bards,' specially delighted, could hardly contain their satisfaction." "never before," said another message of *Reuter*," "Never before has the House of Commons re-echoed with such exultant cheering as greeted the announcement of Mr. Montagu's resignation. It emanated from the Unionist benches, but was so loud and prolonged that it seemed general. Some enthusiasts even waved handkerchiefs." The most charitable explanation with regard to the attitude of Mr. Montagu's own party; and the party that is the rising hope of such Indians as still cling to the idea of receiving freedom as the gift of the foreigner, is contained in the earlier message of *Reuter* that

"Liberal and Labour members received the news without an expression of opinion." To-day it may perhaps be urged that the Government of India are as anxious as the Muslim leaders themselves to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of the questions still at issue between Mussalmans and Great Britain. But of what good is that to us long as the Government of India is only "a subordinate branch of the British Government six thousand miles away" whose "dictation to the British Government" as to what line it ought to pursue in such matters seems to Lord Curzon "quite intolerable." This is what Lord Curzon wrote to Mr. Montagu before giving him the sack" even though poor Montagu thought that he was only being let on with a warning. But evidently he had forgotten that at Denshawi there was flogging as well as hanging, and that Lord Curzon's final court could be trusted not to let off such criminals as he with a warning, but to warn and hang him also for the same offence.

Not one of those believing Mussalmans who is dissatisfied to-day with our policy of Non-Co-operation with Government and co-operation among the Indians could honestly say that Muslim Indian feeling received anything even approaching proper consideration at the hands of Great Britain. And yet hear what this former Viceroy of India, the same who posed as the benefactor of the Mussalmans in partitioning Bengal in 1905, has to say about our cry of anguish at the partitioning of the Khilafat fifteen years later. In his letter to Mr. Montagu he writes: "But the part India has sought to play or been allowed to play in this series of events passes my comprehension......Is Indian opinion always to be the final court of Muslim appeal?"

In his speech before his Cambridge constituency Mr. Montagu had said :

"The Government of India were parties to the Treaty of Sevres. Had the Treaty produced peace, the Government of India would have accepted it loyally; but when it showed, *as I always knew that it would show*, that it could not produce peace, the Government of India pleaded for its revision. I ask whether the Governments of Canada, South Africa or Australia would have remained silent when the so-called peace was destroying

the internal peace of their country?"

Poor Mr. Montagu ! How easy it is, it seems, to forget that while the Governments of Canada, South Africa and Australia are national governments, the Government of India, over which Lord Reading still presides after the dismissal of Mr. Montagu, is not a national government at all. On the contrary, it is one which was bound to lock up for six long years the greatest leader that the nation had produced for many generations, in deference to pressure from the Imperial Government that had treated its partial support of his view in this affair with such open contempt. Dr. Sapru, too, had forgotten this patent difference between India and the Dominions, and had to be reminded of it at the Imperial Conference by the representative of a country once as distressful as our own namely Ireland. We had ourselves urged upon Mr. Montagu the very consideration to which he referred in his Cambridge speech; but it was all in vain, and our advocacy of the same cause which the late Secretary of State advocated with equally little success was punished in various ways by the Government in India. Those who used to tell me on these occasions that Mr. Montagu was sympathetic had to be reminded that his sympathy had proved wholly sterile. I have always held that Mr. Montagu should have resigned on any one of at least half a dozen occasions even before his ultimate dismissal, and now he tells us himself that "he had been repeatedly on the verge of resignation, but he had hesitated *because he did not wish to say to the Mohamedans of India that the solemn pledges which had been made to them were irretrievably lost.*" Irretrievably......that's the confession of the Secretary of State for India. Nevertheless, his resignation *had* to come at last, and to-day he is not only not in the Government, but not even in the House of Commons. Can we then draw from all this any other conclusion than this, that "*solemn pledges which had been made to us are irretrievably lost*"? But no, Mr. Montagu may say that, but I will not say that they are not *irretrievably* lost. Friends, with the assistance of God, and your whole-hearted co-operation, we will yet retrieve them, or perish in the attempt.

England and Lausanne

This treaty is said to be a treaty of Friendship. We shall presently examine it. This was in March, 1922, and although we were promised that due weight would be given to Indian opinion, I ask you to consider what was the attitude of England when six months later the brave Turks, relying not upon the promises of Great Britain, but upon God's grace and their own self-sacrifice and courage, drove Britain's brutal nominees into the sea? You all know that better than I do, and I do not propose to detain you over that. Beaten on the field of battle, beaten, I say advisedly, England now sought to deprive the Turks of the fruits of victory on the conference-table of diplomacy. But here, too, God helped those who helped themselves, and the Treaty of Lausanne proved that the Turks were not only warriors but statesmen as well. Let us hear what Lord Curzon has to say himself of the reasons that brought about the Treaty of Lausanne. Did the English who had commissioned Greece after the Armistice to rob the Turks of Thrace and even of their home-lands in Asia Minor; who were at one time actually considering the question of handing over Constantinople to them; and who had appealed in vain to the Dominions to fight their battle against the now victorious Turks when India could no longer be trusted to make cannon-fodder of her sons after the Karachi Trial—did the English even now repent or relent? The difference between the conditions under which other treaties, including that of Sevres, were imposed and those in which the Lausanne Settlement was arrived at was pointed out by Lord Curzon at the Imperial Conference in the following words :

"Such (dictation of terms at the point of the bayonet) had been the case with all the previous post-War treaties. These had in each case been drawn up by the victorious Powers, sitting, so to speak, on the seat of judgment, in the absence of the culprit, and imposing what penalty or what settlement they chose. Only when the terms had been drawn up was the beaten enemy admitted to be told his sentence and to make the conventional protest of the doomed man. Such, indeed, was the

environment in which the original Treaty of Sevres was drawn up and signed, though never ratified by the Turkish representatives. For otherwise was it at Lausanne. There the Turks sat at the table on a footing of equality with all the other Powers. Every article of the Treaty had to be debated with and explained to them. (Look, what great injustice to poor Great Britain !) Agreement had to be achieved not by brandishing the big stick but by discussion, persuasion and compromise. (This is what Lord Curzon had to confess. Could there be any higher punishment than death? Such men have been killed by our own men !)"

Commenting upon Lord Curzon's defence of the Treaty of Lausanne and of his praise of Allied diplomacy, which was, according to him, reluctant to break up the Conference on important, but not vital, points, and to revert to a state of war, an Indian newspaper, the *Leader*, which is not noted for any excess of sympathy with the Turks, wrote as follows :

"No credit can be given to such pacific and discreet diplomacy when it was based on unwillingness to fight. As Lord Curzon said, "the Turks knew very well that the Allies had no stomach for further fighting; on the contrary, they were very nervous about the bellicose temper of the extremist elements among the Turks." "The Allies were never certain," said the Foreign Secretary, "how far the genuine desire of the leading Turks for peace would control the unruly Nationalist and extremist elements." It will thus appear that the Turks obtained what they wanted literally at the point of the sword and the role of the conquerors and the conquered was reversed at Lausanne. It was the Turks who dictated the terms of the Treaty and the Allies, who dictated the terms of the other post-War treaties, had to accept them ..As a matter of fact, the big stick was brandished by the Turks at Lausanne and the Allies "made the conventional protest of the doomed man". Replying to the severe criticism of the Treaty by those "whose motives in making the attack are not free from citicism", he (i.e., Lord Curzon) said that "it was the best treaty that could be obtained in the circumstances."

Thus it is once more clear that the Turks secured what they did at Lausanne not because of any regard on the part of England for justice to the Turks, or for the religious obligations and sentiments of Indian Mussalmans with regard to the Khilafat, but in spite at England's open hostility towards the Turks and utter disregard of the requirements of Islam. Lord Curzon would have once more brandished the big stick; but, sad to relate, it had changed hands.

I have purposely dealt exclusively with a matter concerning the special interests of Mussalmans and affecting their extra-territorial sympathies, for it is obvious that the treaty of Lausanne, far from settling our national affairs and satisfying our national requirements common to all Indian communities, does not even settle the peculiarly Muslim and religious issue of the Jazirat ul-Arab. But after all, the issues that are our common national issues far exceed in number those that concern the Mussalmans alone. All that the Treaty of Lausanne has done is to declare that the Turks kave not lost their Swaraj as we had done more than a century ago, and as they themselves were within an ace of doing. The Khilafat Committee's demands, and, in, particular the religious requirements with regard to the Jazirat-ul-Arab, still remain unsatisfied. But even if all this had been done, could the Mussalmans give up Non-Co-operation with Government and co-operation, with other Indian communities? In the first place, that would be an unspeakably shameful breach of faith with their non-Muslim brethern of whose help they have so willingly availed themselves. And, in the next place, Indian Mussalmans would be proving that, while they were so anxious for the security of the Turks and the Arabs, Swaraj, they were indifferent to their own! Well could it, then, be said of them :

"Hast thou arranged the affairs of the earth so well that thou meddlest in those of heaven as well?"

The Terrible Alternative to Non-Co-operation

Friends, once more I have perhaps exhausted your patience; but my excuse for it is that I want the Mussalmans who

are being asked to-day to discard the policy of Non-Co-operation with England to confront facts before they reverse a decision to which their sad experiences of co-operation with England had driven them. It is as clear as daylight that so long as India is not an equal partner with England and the Dominions in the Empire, and so long as her Government is but "a subordinate branch of the British Government six thousand miles away," we cannot be satisfied with the goodwill of the Government of India even if it is proved to the hilt. Besides loyalty to a foreign Government, there are other loyalties as well, and so long as Mussalmans in India are liable to be punished for disloyalty to Government because they are loyal to their God and to His Last Prophet, as we ourselves were punished at Karachi, and so long as the Holy Land of Islam is under the control of non-Muslim mandatories when we ourselves had been given God's own mandate for it by His Last Messenger as a deathbed injunction, there is no alternative to Non-violent Non-Co-operation but one, and that, friends, is the terrible alternative of war ! Since the vast bulk of those who try to discredit our policy do so because they are slaves to the fear of Government, and, being unwilling to make *any* sacrifice, could not even dream of adopting that terrible alternative, let us hear no more of a change of policy !

Muslim Co-operation with Non-Muslims

And if we may not co-operate with Great British, is it expedient, to put it on the lowest plane, to cease to co-operate with our non-Muslim brethren ? What is it that has happened since that staunch Hindu, Mahatma Gandhi, went to gaol for advocating the cause of Islam that we must cease to co-operate with his co-religionists ? I know that Hindu-Muslim relations to-day are not precisely those that they were two years ago. But is it possible for any honest and truly patriotic Indian to say that either community is wholly blameless, and that the guilt is entirely one community's ? Friends, I do not believe in diplomacy, and certainly not in that variety of it which is called secret diplomacy. I do not wish to imitate Sir Roger de Coverley, and put you off with the diplomatic dictum.

"Much can be said on both sides of the question." Most regrettable events have unfortunately occurred in Malabar, at Multan, at Agra, at Saharanpur, and elsewhere, and I am prepared to support the creation of a National Tribunal to judge the respective guilt of the two communities. For it cannot be gainsaid even by the community that has suffered the most that complaints have been made by members of the other community as well, and obviously it would neither be fair nor productive of any satisfactory result if either community is saddled with all the guilt and denounced without an adequate enquiry. I did not shrink at Delhi from proposing the appointment of a truly representative Committee of Enquiry; but for reasons which it is not necessary to state here no result has yet been achieved of such a committee's appointment. Two things are, however, patent. The law courts established by Government cannot stop their work while we adjudge the guilt of the two communities. And while it is difficult to arrive at the truth by a national enquiry *after* witnesses have given their testimony, true or false, on oath before the courts of law of the Government, reconciliation itself, which is even more important than the investigation of the truth, is not made easy by the punishment awarded to those who are found guilty by such courts, not un-often on evidence which is not free from suspicion.

The Surest Remedy

What then is to be done? I have already told you that to accept the version of one party is neither fair, nor would it help us in creating in the other party whose version was disbelieved without any enquiry a disposition towards reconciliation and reform. The only remedy that I can suggest for instant adoption is also the surest, and it was this which was all but adopted towards the end of our discussions at Delhi in the Committee appointed to consider this question. Even after we had decided that a Committee of Enquiry should visit the places where regret table incidents had followed Hindu-Muslim dissensions, and after we had even nominated the members of this Committee, we were within an ace of cancelling all this because we noted at a later stage of our deliberations a welcome change

in the attitude of the leaders on the two sides. There was now a desire to let bygones and heartily co-operate for the attainment of Swaraj, as they had been doing two years previously. Obviously, the protagonists on the two sides had once more had a glimpse of that unity of which the Mahatma was at once the chief preacher and the best symbol, and the prospect of gaining party-victories once more appeared mean and contemptible in their eyes. But a difference arose on a petty issue and they parted again. Friends, I pray that God may grant them once more a glimpse of that unity, and that this time it may not be as fleeting as it had been before. Nay, I pray that they may keep ever before them a picture of that unity and the glorious vistas of that freedom which can be seen only through the avenue of national unity, so that all else that is of fair seeming, but which is associated with slavery, may lose its charm for them and be blotted out for all eternity.

The Pet'iness of Disturbing Issues

At Delhi when the protagonists of the Shuddhi movement were about to settle the matter and when the matter was about to come to a final understanding, the thing had broken on some small matter. Believe me, it is not by tawdry tinselled rhetoric that I hope to settle such vital issues. But, although the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity is vital, and, in fact, the most vital that we have to settle, the issues which disturb that unity are contemptibly petty. Nothing makes me more ashamed than the pettiness of these issues, and I confess I find it difficult to refute the calumny of our enemies that we are unfit for Responsible Government when I contemplate their potency for mischief side by side with their pettiness. Far be it from me to sneer at the modes of worship of my fellow-men; but I feel unspeakably depressed when I think that there are fellow-countrymen of mine, including my own co-religionists, who would jeopardise the recovery of our lost liberty, including religious liberty itself, for the sake of the satisfaction they seem to derive out of cutting a branch of Pipal tree overhanging a public thoroughfare and interfering with the passage of a pole of ridiculous length, or out of beating tom-toms and blowing trumpets before a house

of worship at prayer-time while moving in a procession. Friends, if we cannot acquire a better sense of proportion let us be honest, at least with ourselves if not with others, and give up all thought of freedom. We must not talk of Swaraj even within the Empire, let alone out of it. What is Kenya to slaves like us or we to Kenya? Why need we hanker after a place in the King-Emperor's palace when we are not even fit for a place in his stables? And what is it to us if the Holy Lanc of Islam should attract many a casino and *cafe chantant*, or the new warden of the Mussalmans' Holy of Holies should become one of the long tale of impotent potentates maintained by an Imperial Government only to be pushed off their ancestral thrones whenever they should forget themselves and think that God has made them men and not merely puppets in an Imperial show. If *alams* and *pipal* trees and noisy processions are our "horizon's utter sum", then all our Congresses and Khilafat Commiteees are mere mockery.

Let us ring down--the farce is nothing worth.

Let us close this chapter of childish make-beliefs, and taking the first train back home, let us devote ourselves henceforward to the realisation of the ideal of petty self-concern which alone befits a nation of slaves. Let us at least not take the sacred name of Liberty in vain. Let us add our confession to the claim of our opponents, and admit that God, Whom the great religious teachers of the East in which all the existing religions have had their source, had taught us to regard, just, has yet been so unjust to a fifth of mankind that He has made them totally unfit for self-rule, and has left it to His White creatures hailing from Europe to correct His mistake, and carry on for all time the administration of India. But if we do not want to drag our spiritual ancestors into the race along with ourselves and to blaspheme a just God, let us elevate ourselves to the height of our ideals and lift the masses instead of sinking down to their low level.

The Root of Evil

But since I have referred to the low level of the masses, let

me say this much for them that what I wrote in 1904 in criticising the education given in the Indian universities is still true, and even to-day (this is what I wrote) "the greater portion of bigotry agitates not the bosoms of the ignorant and the illiterate but excites to fury and to madness the little-learned of the land." And it is not the love of our own religion that makes us quarrel with our fellow-countrymen of other faiths, but self-love and petty personal ambition. "The coming of the Mahatma" has meant the destruction of "the kingdoms of the nations" and the foundation in their place of the one united Kingdom of the Nation to be the Congress whose Chief Servant was his great glory. But these little "kings" who had lost their little "thrones" were not reconciled to the idea of national service under the banner of the Nations' Chief Servant, and were pining for restoration. You have heard what Milton said with regard to Self-rule : "Better to live in Hell than to serve in Heaven." These petty people who want to rule India to day would better recognise this. Better to be privileged to be cooks than to be bulls' tails. So long as Mahatma Gandhi and his principal co-workers were free, they had not the courage to raise the standard of revolt, and there was no room for them in the economy of the Indian world except as openly despised slaves of the foreigner or as secretly discontented adherents of the National Federation. And so they chose the latter alternative. But, with the Mahatma immured at Yerrowada, they reasserted themselves, and since they could not hope to occupy his position, they have persistently, though not professedly, addressed their appeals to communal passions and jealousies in order to destroy the National Federation and hasten the recovery of their petty principalities. Before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi several streams, some large and some small, were running more or less parallel to each other, and little boats were being rowed on them I was in one of them. But soon after his advent, almost all of them were directed into one channel and became tributaries of a mighty river rapidly moving on to join the sea. On the broad bosom of this Ganges there sailed a powerful ship manned by lusty sailors, captained by the Mahatma and flying the National flag, which I had the honour to unfurl to-day. What the petty ambitions

of petty men have been urging ever since the Mahatma's incarceration is that we should scrap the big ship and take to the little row-boats again. But since these little boats are not safe enough craft for the mighty river hurrying on towards the sea, they propose a revalution in Nature itself, and ask that the great river should flow back into its old tributaries. But Nature cannot be thwarted, and the futility of the desire to make the Ganges flow backwards is a thing known even to our village fools. When party questions came up, I acted in the name of the Congress. When such questions come up and I am asked to settle, if I can do so I do it in the name of the Congress. You will have to tell me whether I can do it or not. If the name of this Congress, and of the Indian Nation, nay, even in the name of that Destiny which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we may, I warn this little breed of men that, God willing, they will never succeed, and that the Indian Nation cannot look upon their insidious activities with unconcern.

Toleration and Fraternal Self-Sacrifice

Friends, to punish the guilty is not without its advantages even in the domain of politics; but the surrest remedy for political disunion is, as I have already suggested, to create on all sides a disposition to forget and forgive. But this is not all, and if we desire to prevent a recurrence of regrettable incidents we must remove the causes of friction. Conformity in all things is only too often desired, and this not only by the bigots, but also by some of the most large-hearted of men. Religious reformers have at all times betrayed a fatal weakness for comprehension or the preparation of a religious compound formed of many samples gathered from many different sources. They have hoped that by adopting a policy of inclusion they would be able to form a faith embracing doctrines culled from diverse faith and acceptable to all the followers of all these faiths. That is how they hope to attain Uniformity and secure Conformity. But history has shown that the cause of peace and unity has not been greatly furthered by the formation of such eclectic faith. Only too often have they added one more to the warring creeds existing before and have

only increased the disunion they were creating. Such well-intentioned failures have at last made people fall back upon Toleration. This is not the indifferentism and absence of strong convictions which often pass for toleration, but a far more positive principle in life which co-exists with beliefs passionately held. I could not define it better than by quoting an American who declared to a fellow-countryman of his holding very different views to his own. "I strongly disagree with every word of what you say; but I shall fight, Sir, to the last drop of my blood for maintaining your right to say it!" That, friends, is the best definition of Toleration. The Quran which calls upon Mussalmans even to fight in defence of their Faith whenever their freedom of faith is assailed or jeopardised, sums up its teaching on tolerance in the words, "To you your faith, to me mine." If we all agreed to act upon this principle, and at the same time emphasised the features common to different faiths and the spirituality characteristic of all there would be no strife in the world but peace and tranquillity everywhere.

Application of this Principle to Outstanding Issues

Let us apply this principle to some of the outstanding issues between the various communities of India. It for instance, processions can be taken out on public roads and no objection is taken to music being played thereon, a Mussalman should not object to a procession with music taken out by Hindus, or by other non-Muslim neighbours of his, unless it interferes with his own exercise of some recognised right such as conducting Divine Service in a fitting manner. If again, a long pole can be carried in procession through the streets without danger to life and limb, no non-Muslim should object to it if it is so carried "with musical honours." But then the Muslims indulging in such practices, which are to say the least of it, of doubtful religious validity, have no right to demand that a non-Muslim neighbour of theirs should permit the looping off the branches of a tree which he holds sacred, whether with reason or without it, and which is growing on his land and is his property. If there is no law against smoking in public places, no Parsi should object to a non-Parsi's lighting a cigarette in a street even

though he himself holds fire to be too sacred an element to be defiled in this way. Similarly, if it is no offence to slaughter animals, and a man kills a fowl, or a cow, or a pig, or kills any animal to provide food for himself or for others or for sacrificial purposes or in a particular manner not involving cruelty to animals, his neighbour should not object to it on the ground that he holds all life too sacred to be destroyed, or that he looks upon the cow as upon a mother, or that he considers a pig too unclean to be eaten, or that he is required by his own religion to kill animals in a different manner to his neighbour's. In all these cases it is, of course, presumed that the animal slaughtered is the property of the man who slaughters it or causes it to be slaughtered, and not his neighbour's whose property he may not unlawfully seize and use or destroy. But we have not, alas, reached a stage of toleration in India when the free exercise of his right by one of us can escape being resented by some others. In fact, the worst of it is that some of us, while they insist upon the exercise of their right, sometimes exercise it with the desire to annoy their neighbours, and in a manner that is sure to annoy them. The jeering at men of other faiths when one is taking out a procession required or sanctioned by our own faith, the beating of tom-toms and playing other instruments, which often produce more noise than music, with special vigour before a house of worship of another community, and particularly when Divine Service or some other religious rite is in progress and is likely to be thereby disturbed; the needless lopping off of trees held sacred by Hindus which overhang public thoroughfares, or doing it in an exultant manner; the blowing of cigarette smoke in the face of, or too close to a Parsi or a Sikh; the wanton destruction of a good deal of animal life in the sight or immediate neighbourhood of Jains; carrying a garlanded cow in procession through a locality inhabited by Hindus as well for purposes of slaughter; or slaughtering it in a place where Hindus cannot help seeing it—these and many other such are things that occur only too frequently whenever there is a tension of feeling between the communities concerned. And provocation and insolent exultation of the nature described above often lead to hot words, and not seldom to blows which sometimes end in loss of human

life.

How to Deal with such Matters

There can be no measure sufficiently comprehensive to safeguard public tranquillity and peace in all such cases, and I can think of no National Pact embracing all such situations, even if it is permitted to assume inordinate proportions, and to include details that must make us the laughing-stock of the world. The best remedy, I must repeat, is the creation of the correct spirit in which the different communities exercise their rights. But it is possible for a national body such as the Congress to deal with some of the principal causes of friction and to remove them by bringing about an agreement between leaders of the communities concerned And this it must do. But, while attempting to influence public opinion, and to regulate public action through the agency of such leaders, with courage and confidence, a body like the Congress must be careful not to demand from any community that it should relinquish any rights which may, in the present circumstances involve a sacrifice, far beyond its capacity. It must be remembered that Swaraj, although it is our destined goal, and is soon likely to be in sight, has yet to be won, and before it is won we have no sanctions of which we can make use like a Government. We must depend exclusively upon persuasion and example. But even if we had a Government of our own, it could not rightly, or even successfully, compel large sections of the people to give up the exercise of any right unless it provided for them corresponding facilities in some other direction.

Cow-Killing

The question of cow-killing is an instance in point. I know how sacred a cow is in the eyes of my Hindu brothers, and who knows better than my brother and myself how anxious our absent Chief was to secure its preservation? His action in so selflessly leading the Khilafat movement was, no doubt, characteristically generous and altruistic; but he himself used to say that he was trying to protect the cow of the Mussalmans, was their Khilafat, so that this grateful community

which had learnt from its Scriptures that there could be no return for kindness, would be induced to protect his own cow in return. This was however, only Mahatma Gandhi's way of emphasising his love for the cow. And even before he so picturesquely called the Khilafat our cow, my brother and I had decided not to be any party to cow-killing ourselves. No beef is consumed since then in our house even by our servants, and we consider it our duty to ask our co-religionists to act similarly. As for sacrificing cows, my brother and I have never done it, but have always sacrificed goats, since a sacrifice of some such animal is a recognised religious duty. Much can be done in this way, and we have learnt by experience during the three or four years following the Hindu-Muslim *entente* and co-operation that it is not difficult to reduce cow-sacrifice, even before Swaraj is won, to insignificant proportions.

But much as I desire that even ordinary cow-kiling throughout the year for the purpose of providing food should be altogether discontinued, or, at least reduced to similarly meagre proportions, I am only too conscious of the fact that in looking forward to an early realisation of my wishes I am hoping against hope. Mussulmans in India who can afford to purchase the dearer mutton eat, beef only on rare occasions. But for the poorer towns-folk among the Mussalmans it is the staple food. Coming from the centre of Rohilkhand, or the land of the Rohillas, I know how difficult it is for them to discontinue the use of beef in the present circumstances. The Pathan cannot suppress his surprise when he comes across people in India who "eat corn with corn"; and Rampur wags says : "Let there be meat, even if it be a dog's." When following the fashion of British Indian Municipalities, Rampur also closed many meat shops and opened in their place a central Meat Market, it was found difficult to cope with the demand for beef, and so disastrous proved the results of a keen competition for the reduced supply that the *Markeet*, as it used to be called, was now descriptively rechristened *Marpeet*? In the case of this class of Mussalmans the use of beef is at present a more or less acutely felt economic necessity.

The only safe and sure way of stopping cow-killing in this case is to take steps to lower the price of mutton which is prohibitively high, and thus reduce the very large margin that there is at present between the prices of mutton and beef. I am far from desiring that the cost of living should be still further increased for any section of this impoverished land, not excluding my own community, which is admittedly one of the poorest; but I cannot help pointing out that by far the most numerous owners of cows are the Hindus, and that if they did not sell cows after they had ceased to give milk, there would be much less cow-killing than there is to-day. Even now we can encourage goat and sheep breeding in order to save the cow, but when we can frame our Budgets for a Swaraj Government, it should be a comparatively easy matter to utilise a considerable portion of the savings from Military expenditure for the same purpose. Nevertheless I appeal to my co-religionists even to-day to discontinue the use of beef and not to wait until Swaraj is won when their sacrifice would be worth much less. The joint family system of India and not the free competition of the Manchester School must be our social and political ideal for India's different communities. But if there is to be competition among the communities that form the Indian Joint Family, let it be a competition in forbearance and self-sacrifice, and I maintain that the community which willingly surrenders more of its cherished rights and strongly-entertained sentiments for the sake of sister communities and the peace and harmony of India will prove the most invincible in the end.

Adjustment of Communal Shares in Representative Bodies and in the Administration

I have already explained to you what I think about the main cause of communal quarrels and the share of the educated classes in misleading the masses and using them in order to serve their personal ambitions. But matters like cow-killing and processions with music are not the only things that provide sources of friction. The adjustment of communal shares in representative institutions, local, provincial and All-India, and in the administration also, gives rise to bitter communal dis-

sensions, and here it is clearly impossible to shift the blame on to the masses. Once more personal ambitions well or ill disguised as communal interests, play a great part, and specious phrases, such as greater efficiency and superior educational qualifications, are used to cover the injustice intended. This is all the more surprising because similar pretexts when put forward by the bureaucrats are mercilessly exposed by the selfsame people. Since this fallacy of the higher efficiency of monopolists has not yet received its quietus, I am compelled to say that the intelligence of the few can never be a proper safeguard of the interests of the many. And when people are not actuated by motives of broad-minded patriotism, the superior intelligence of one group or section cannot but be regarded by other groups and sections as a rather dangerous possession. It may, however, be that even where the motives are pure they are none the less suspect. That, friends, is our *karma*, the legacy left by the injustice of past generations, and instead of taking undue offence, we must live down such reputations. In politics as in business credit has first to be established, and a good balance-sheet and a moderately good dividend are far more useful in the long run than the most attractive prospectus. We could have gone much farther on the road to Liberty an Self-Rule if minorities had been quite sure of the company which they were being invited to join. But the common platform of the Congress has now provided an excellent opportunity to all of us to prove the patriotic character of our motives, and however long it may be before we succeed in establishing our credit, nothing can be done without it; and losing our temper over unmerited suspicions, or hustling those who entertain them and trying to jockey them into an expression of confidence that they do not yet feel in us, is poor business.

The Lucknow Compact which forced the hands even of the bureaucracy and compelled it to agree to such poor Reforms as have been doled out to India would in all likelihood suffice for the present for such of us as have decided to enter the Legislatures; and even if it does not, this should spur us on, to quicken the pace and try to reach our national destination of Swaraj all the earlier so that we may re-adjust communal shares

in representative bodies. Friends, let me tell you frankly that I do not consider it likely that for some time yet we can afford to dispense with separate electorates. But I can assure you no one would rejoice more than myself on the day that the minorities themselves announced that they needed no such protection. It may perhaps help you to judge my *bona fides* in this matter if I tell you that I had strongly urged the adoption of the Indian plan for the protection of the Christian minorities in the Eastern Vilayets of Turkey known as Armenia.

But two intermediate steps may be taken before we abolish separate electorates altogether. The first is that the minorities should be free to elect any Indian as their representative. I shall deem it a great honour the day a non-Muslim minority elects me in preference to its own members to represent it in the national assembly. And I know of no Muslim to whom I could give my vote with greater confidence than to that great Khilafatist, Mahatma Gandhi.

Another step that we could well take would be the progressive creation of mixed electorates, gradually to replace separate electorates. Some of you may perhaps remember that I had opposed the Rt. Hon. Syed Ameer Ali who did not wish to risk any seat by agreeing to the retention of some mixed electorates, and wanted safe, even if fewer, seats for the Mussalmans when the Minto-Morley Reforms were being discussed. As intercommunal relations improved the number of seats thrown open for contest in mixed electorates may be increased and those allotted to separate electorates decreased, till all come to be contested in mixed territorial electorates. The same policy should be adopted in throwing administrative posts open from communal to general competition.

All the foregoing consideration have to be kept in view in dealing with the composition of local bodies where, although the issues may often be petty, the passions of the people concerned are more liable to be excited.

A sad enough confirmations of this is furnished by the unfortunate dissensions in the Punjab over the distribution of municipal seats. The conditions in that province sometimes make me wonder whether Jallianwallah Bagh and the Crawling Lane are really situated in the Punjab.

Mental Myopia

In the short passage which I quoted in the earlier part of this address from another address of mine, delivered as long ago as in 1904, I had warned my audience against placing any reliance on the "misleading unity of opposition", and I would be the last person to believe that we can remain a united people merely by feeding on the memory of Martial Law terrors. Many a coalition formed in Opposition and adversity has broken down after the first flush of victory at the polls and in the very first days of Government, and if Swaraj is not only to be won, but also to be retained thereafter, our unity must be based on something more lasting than the memories of common suffering. And yet I am compelled to remind both Hindus and Mussalmans who complain so bitterly to-day of one another's injustice that I know of nothing more difficult for either to endure from the other than the cold-blooded decision taken by General Dyer to shoot and to shoot strong at Jallianwallah Bagh and the calculated national humiliation of the Crawling Lane. It seems to me that we in the North suffer from a mental myopia, and as we move forward our sufferings are left behind, and gradually recede into obscurity, so that even at a very short distance of time the troubles of to-day blot out all recollection of the terrors of yesterday. And what is worse, each community remembers only that which it has itself suffered, retaining in its memory no record of the sufferings it had itself caused to others.

The Community of the Badmashes

But in referring thus to communities we are apt to forget that it is not communities that cause suffering to other communities in the course of popular affrays, but rowdy elements of

India's population which cause injury to the peace-loving. The *badmashes* belong to no community but form a distinct community of their own, and to it all is grist that comes to the mill. I was greatly impressed by an article contributed by Lala Lajpatrai from his American exile during the War when Hindu monied classes had suffered greatly in some districts of the Punjab from the depredations of Muslim *badmashes*. There was great danger of intercommunal strife, but the Lalaji hastened to point out that the Hindu sufferers had not suffered because they were Hindus but because they belonged to the monied classes. It was a case of the Haves and the Have-Nots and not a case of the Hindus and the Mussalmans. This has always to be borne in mind, particularly when there are not only the two contending parties but a third as well, which laughs just as heartily as we fight and abuse one another. Dr. Tagore has spoken a great deal since the outbreak of rowdyism in the North on the subject of inter-communal quarrels; but the reports of his lectures made me doubt a little whether he remembered what he wrote on the same subject when similar rowdyism, but more deliberate and previously planned, had broken out over cow-killing in Behar in 1917. He happened to be travelling in a compartment shared with him by a British military officer who sneered at Indian aspirations and asked the Poet how his fellow-countrymen could talk of Swaraj when he a foreigner had to be called in every now and then to take his troops to the disturbed areas and keep the peace between Indians of different faiths. Then, at least the Poet remembered that there was a third who laughed while we suffered, and reminded the British officer of his existence. The latter asked whether there were no such quarrels before the advent of the British, and the Poet admitted their previous existence as well but he was then prompt to point out that there was one difference. They quarrelled even then, but they did not let many suns go down upon their wrath because the moment they recovered their lost tempers they also recollected that they had to live together for better or worse, and since life would be infinitely dull without more or less friendly intercourse, the sooner they made up their differences and became friends again, the better. But ever since the *tertins gaudens* had come on the scene such quarrels had become more frequent and

such reconciliations fewer and farther between.

The hand of Easu and the Voice of Jacob

European husbands and Indian wives have a horror of that triangular family life in which the third side is represented by the mother-in-law. Imagine then the blessed state of that union in which the mother-in-law is not only a permanent feature of family life and never dies, but in which she alone runs the household. And worse than all, the mother-in-law that makes each of us pine for single blessedness combines *two* distinct natures in *one* person, and with ever ready sympathy consoles either party, as the occasion demands, and, better still, condemns the other, in the joint role of the mother of *both*! This would indeed be matter for laughter if we had only enough not to be the dupes of this double-dealing mother-in-law. But the moment a cow is killed by a Mussalman in a provocative manner, or a noisy procession is taken out by a Hindu in front of a mosque where prayer may be going on, we are ready to rush at one another's throats forgetting that Mussalmans have never been known to be wanting when it was their own co-religionists that had to be denounced to the Government as seditionists and rebels, and that Hindus have had no better record of communal cohesion in similar circumstances. Have no Hindus reported against Mahatma Gandhi and no Musalmans against me? Our own sufferings have taught us that there is never a lack of one's co-religionists to do all the dirty work that may be required of them, and when a Mussalman is so ready to hurt a brother Muslim, or, for that matter, the entire Muslim community, why need we be surprised if a Hindu is employed to do the same? No, friends, like *badmashes*, traitors belong to no community, but form a tribe of their own. Some of you must have read Labour's denunciation of "International Finance." We have even better reason to denounce "Inter-Communal Goondaism." A Mussalman may throw beef during the night into a temple or break an idol, and yet the Muslim community may be just as innocent of this provoking sacrilege as the Hindu community itself; and in similar circumstances the Hindu community may be wholly blameless even though a

Hindu certainly threw pork into a mosque or descerated Holy Quran. Some people asked me to disown the Mussalman Minister in the Punjab. I said to them that I was prepared to disown him, if they said I had ever owned him. What is the difference between him and the European official? They are both limbs of the same body! They belong to the Government and not to me.

But even more clear than this is the case of a Muslim Minister who may have shown favouritism towards Mussalman in the matter of patronage, and of a Hindu Minister similarly showing undue favour to Hindus. Obviously they are members of a foreign Government whatever caste-mark they may bear. The hands are the hands of Easu, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. And yet the people of a province that has still to stop the pensions of a Dyer and an O'Dwyer are prepared to co-operate with those who insist on paying for Indian murder out of Indian funds, and to cease to co-operate with their neighbours and fellow-sufferers, only because a Minister who happens to belong to the community of the latter dispenses such petty patronage as the Reforms empower him to do in a manner that does not meet with their approval. After this one wonders what Non-Co-operation means. When the Congress is publicly welcoming Indians who resign their posts, even though it thinks it is perhaps too much just yet to call upon them to resign, there are people who call themselves Congressmen but forget all that Mahatma Gandhi had taught them of Non-Co-operation only because a Minister in their province is giving a few more petty posts to members of his own community than they think he ought to do. Friends, it is not a little embarrassing to me that this Minister happens to be a co-religionist of mine; but believe me, I would have felt even more ashamed than I now feel embarrassed if the complaint about such petty posts had come from my co-religionists. Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb, for whose speedy and complete recovery we all pray, has related to me what unspeakable shame he felt when co-religionists of his and mine had the hardihood to show some scratches on the walls of the mosques at Multan and some broken pitchers in justification of their counter-claim that if Hindu temples had been destroyed,

fault. And then the fray begins. The big guns of abuse are sent up at a gallop, and long range howitzers which leave none scot-free up to the seventh generation are brought into action. Then appears the mall auxiliarly, and if he is equally devoid of common-sense and equally jealous of his *izzat*, he opens fire instantly with something that shatters the *izzat* of the adversary for ever. Thus when the other male auxiliarly rushes up to the scene of action on hearing the noise of this bombardment, he calls a truce to this wordy warfare, and, like the practical creature that he is, he promptly breaks the head of the other male. And it is a lucky quarter of the town if hostilities remain confined to the families directly concerned. The best commentary on all this is furnished by the action of the brace of young barbarians with whom hostilities had commenced walking off arm-in arm to enjoy another game of *gill-danda* or *kabaddi* just as police may be marching the Big Four off to the lock-up!

It is such experiences as these which have taught us that the best method of settling intercommunal quarrels is neither to advocate the cause of your community, as in my time I have often done, nor even to pose as an arbitrator with an open and a judicious mind, but to earn the abuse of your own community. And since my brother and I have received an earnest of this already, I feel satisfied that not only am I qualifying myself for the office of a genuine patriot, but that I may begin to entertain hopes that the two communities will soon be reconciled. After this, need I say I recommend this course of "political exercises" to all my friends of every community?

Sanghatan

Having explained my own attitude at such length I do not think I am called upon to say much about the Sanghatan. I have certainly never publicly opposed it, and if anyone thinks so he is mistaken, and must have been misled by some ill-reported speech or interview. This is entirely an affair to my Hindu brethren, and if they think they need a Sanghatan they should be allowed a perfectly free hand in the matter. Every community is entitled to undertake such social reform as it

needs and if the Sanghatan is organised to remove untouchability and to provide for the speedy assimilation of the Antyaj and their complete absorption into Hindu society, I must rejoice at it both as a Mussalman and as a Congressman. Ever since the Congress at Nagpur called upon the Hindu delegates "to make a special effort to rid Hinduism of the reproach of untouchability" and "respectfully urged the religious heads to help the growing desire to reform Hinduism in the matter of its treatment of the suppressed classes," this question has enlisted the direct interest and sympathy of the Congress. I remember very well that towards the closing months of the year 1921, Mahatma Gandhi was making the removal of untouchability the test of the Hindu's yearning for Swaraj, and if orthodox Hindu religious bodies have now seriously decided to make the required reform in Hinduism, it is bound to rejoice the hearts of that large-hearted Hindu and of all his followers.

But I cannot help recalling that this matter remained in abeyance for a considerable time, and that it was not taken up with any great zeal until after the tragic events in Malabar had caused some months later a wave of indignation and resentment to sweep over the distant Punjab, and Multan Hindus had themselves suffered from the unruly passions of the Muslim mob. It is this combination of circumstances which causes uneasiness to many of those who yearn for the unification of India and know how little weight our recently achieved unity can just yet sustain. A broken limb which has just come out of a steel frame should not be too severely strained. We may not believe every suspicion or rumour, but we must not overlook their potency for mischief if they are not quickly removed or disproved; and there is no doubt that people are busy creating the suspicion that the removal of untouchability is not intended to result in the absorption of the supposed classes into Hindu society, but merely to use them as auxiliaries on the Hindu side in future affrays. This being so, I ask if there is no ground for the uneasiness of Mahatma Gandhi's followers who have been sedulously taught, in the words of our resolution at Nagpur, "to lay special emphasis on *Non-Violence* being an integral part of the Non-Co-operation Resolution", and to

invite the attention of the people to the fact that "*Non-Violence* in word and deed is as essential between the people themselves as in respect of the Government," and finally, that "the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy, but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of Non-Co-operation." If in removing the reproach of untouchability we give cause to the world to reproach us with adding to pre-existing violence, will it not sadden the heart of the Mahatma? Friends, let us befriend the suppressed classes of their own injured sakes and not for the sake of injuring others or even avenging our own injuries.

Another feature of the Sanghatan movement is the increase of interest in physical culture. This is all to the good, and if flabbiness and cowardice can be removed from any section of the Indian people there is cause only for joy. Here, too, however, there arises the question of the spirit, and I am sincerely glad that the frank discussions at Delhi last September gave an opportunity to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to proclaim to the world that he himself favours the creation of common *akhadas* in which young men of all communities can take their shares. As for the protection of life and property and—I regret that I should have to add—the honour of our sisters, he again proclaimed his original intention that common territorial Civic Guards should be formed. It was only because he was told that the Hindu Sabha by which his motion was being discussed could not constitutionally bind other communities that he altered his resolution and agreed to the creation of Hindu Guards.

The Sanghatan of the Congress Conciliation Committee

But in entire agreement with Hindu leaders the Hindu-Muslim Unity Committee recommended certain resolutions to the Congress, for adoption on all these subjects, and since they were immediately passed by the Congress let us now see that we give full effect to them. To prevent the possibility of disunion we have, in the first place, to establish at the headquarters of every district, under the supervision of the District

Congress Committees, and in consultation with Khilafat Committees, Hindu Sabhas and other responsible local associations, mixed Committees for the maintenance of peace and security throughout the districts. In case of any incident likely to disturb such peace and security, they would endeavour to minimise its evil consequences and provide for a speedy and satisfactory settlement, and would encourage the people, in case of any provocation, to conduct themselves with restraint, and to refer the matter to such Committees for redress of their grievances, instead of themselves resorting to retaliatory measures. I have since then realised with grief and pain that in some districts the Congress Committees have ceased to function, and that Congress workers have in some cases themselves taken a leading part in exciting inter-communal hostility. This would necessitate for some time at least the formation of supervisory bodies to check the work of the District Committees and to be substitutes for them in areas in which such Committees have not been formed. A permanent Provincial, and a similar National Conciliation Board also seem to me to be called for, and had such Boards been in existence perhaps they could have averted unfortunate collisions in some localities. These Boards could perhaps be utilised also for making enquiries into similar incidents that occur in future in spite of all our precautions, and, if necessary, to apportion the guilt between the communities concerned. Let us be ready with our machinery, and if the people know that we mean to stamp out such rowdyism and to maintain peace, security and inter-communal friendship, there is little likelihood of our having to sit in judgment upon contending communities.

Civic Guards

In the next place, the Congress resolved at Delhi that its local Committees be instructed to form and maintain, under their own supervision and control, local Corps of Civic Guards (open to all communities), throughout the country, for the maintenance of peace and order, and for the performance of other civic duties. Local Committees of the Congress were also to be instructed to induce and encourage the people to take up

physical culture, and to provide necessary facilities for this purpose so that our people may be enabled to undertake their self-defence. I have heard of communal *dals* and *akhadas*, but I fear the local Committees have not yet had sufficient time to organise Congress Corps of Civic Guards and open Congress *akhadas*, I, however, know of one School of Physical Culture at Ajmer which sent some of its members of the Delhi Congress, and while pleased with their physical development, I rejoiced still more when I learnt that, in spite of much persuasion to throw in their lot with their community during the unfortunate affray there and indulge in partisan violence, these young men remained wholly non-violent and refused to take sides. Can anyone say after this that the Congress exercises no influence in favour of national unity and non-violence? Whenever we have men like our Arjunlal Sethiji, Maulana Moinuddin and Mirza Abdul Qadir Beg, we may confidently look forward to the maintenance, or, at least, the earliest possible restoration of peace Dr. Hardikar has, I am happy so say, interested himself in the creation of Volunteer Corps, and let me confess, friends, that even to-day when I am presiding over the Congress I feel I would be more in my element if I were working in Dr. Hardikar's place. If only the Government knew how necessary is the formation of volunteer crops of Civic Guards to keep our crowds even more peaceful than they already are and far more orderly and self-restrained, it would not dream of using its Criminal Law Amendment Act against them and their organisers, provided, of course, it too desired peace and order to prevail in the land. In this matter I have a personal end to serve also. Travelling as constantly as I do, and attending mass meetings by the dozen, and being unfortunately only too often carried in procession, I feel the need of such Corps more than the stay-at-home among as, and I am often tempted to take in hand the local volunteers attending on such-occasions, forgetting for the moment that no man can attend at his own funeral.

Sense of Honour of our Badmashes

But let me say one word on the subject of the protection

of the honour of our women before I take leave of the Sanghatan question, and let me preface my last word on the subject with the admission that it is not really mine but my wife's. At Almora where she was addressing a ladies' meeting composed mainly of her Hindu sisters, she said that if in a place such as Almora, where Mussalmans form a very insignificant minority, she found that an anti-Muslim riot had broken out, and her male relations were not available to help her to protect her own or her daughter's honour, she would unhesitatingly appeal to the first Hindu as to a brother even if she knew him to be a *badmash*, and ask him to take her and her children under his personal protection. She said she had enough confidence in the sense of honour even of India's *badmashes* and in their "sportsmanship" so to speak, and I doubt if there are many *badmashes* in India on whom such a personal appeal of a sister in distress will fail to have any effect. Friends, trust disarms even wickedness and succeeds where six-chambered revolvers fail, and Shakespeare knew human nature better than some of us seem to do when he wrote :

"There is a soul of goodness in things evil."

I cannot do better than to appeal to my sisters to teach us to trust each other more than we do at present, and by their own courageous confidence develop in the worst of us that God-given "soul of goodness."

Shuddhi

Another movement that has affected Hindu-Muslim relation is Shuddhi. I myself believe in a missionary religion, and by a missionary religion should be taken to mean one in which, in the words of Professor Max Muller, the spreading of the truth and the conversion of unbelievers are raised to the rank of a sacred duty. It is the spirit of truth in the hearts of believers which cannot rest unless it manifests itself in thought, word and deed, which is not satisfied till it has carried its message to every human soul. till what it believes to be the truth is accepted as the truth by all the members oi the human family.

Christianity and Buddhism as well as Islam are known to be missionary religions, but Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism are generally regarded as non-missionary.

Now, this has been my complaint for a long time against Hinduism, and on one occasion, lecturing at Allahabad in 1907, I had pointed out the contrast between Mussalmans and Hindus, by saying that the worst that could be said of a Muslim was that he had a tasteless mess which he called a dish fit for kings, and wanted all to share it with him, thrusting it down the throats of such as did not relish it and would rather not have it, while his Hindu brother who prided himself on his cookery, retired into the privacy of his kitchen and greedily devoured all that he had cooked, without permitting even the shadow of his brother to fall on his food, or sparing even a crumb for him. This was said not altogether in levity; and in fact, I once asked Mahatma Gandhi to justify his feature of his faith to me. It will be strange, then, if to-day, when there are evidence of a missionary zeal in the activities of my Hindu brethren, I should resent their efforts in spreading their faith. More than that, if the Malkana Rajputs are in reality so unfamiliar with Islam as to be taken for Hindus, Mussalmans must thank Hindu missionaries for so forcibly reminding them of their own duty to look to the condition of millions of Mussalmans whose knowledge of Islam is as defective as their practice of its rites is slack.

Both communities must be free to preach as well as practise the tenets of their respective faiths. There are competing types of culture in the world, each instinct with the spirit of propagandism, and I hope we live in an age of conscious selection as between ideal systems. We cannot surely wish to practise that wasteful, and, at best, a precarious, elimination of "false doctrine" by actual destruction of those who hold it. I hope the age of the Spanish Inquisition has gone for ever, and no one would think of abolishing heresy by wiping out the heretic. Progress is now possible along the more direct and less painful path of conversion. But it must be the result of the exercise of the power of rational choice, and the man whose conversion we seek must be free to choose his faith. What true Muslim

could be satisfied by the kind of "conversion" which some fanatical Moplahs are believed to have effected during the period of the Malabar troubles by forcibly depriving some Nairs of their tufts of hair indicating their Hindu faith? No better in the sight of God is that outward conformity which is forced upon a person by bringing undue worldly pressure to bear upon him.

Allegations of such pressure by zamindars and money-lenders and by a numerical majority of neighbours in the surrounding areas have been made and denied, and counter-allegations have been made. This cannot but react unfavourably on national unity; and when over a very small matter the decision to put a stop to all demonstrative and inflammatory methods of mass conversion and reclamation was given up, the Hindu-Muslim Unity Committee at Delhi recommended to the Congress a resolution which was duly adopted, that a Committee be formed to enquire into incidents connected with "Shuddhi" and "Anti-Shuddhi" movements, to visit places wherever coercion, intimidation, exercise of undue pressure or influence, or use of methods of proselytisation inconsistent with such a religious object is alleged or suspected, and to recommend such means as it thinks necessary for the prevention of such practices. Every political party in the West is, or at least, pretends to be jealous of its honour and willingly consents to have a Corrupt Practices Act passed by the Legislature. We who pride ourselves on our greater spirituality must be truly jealous of our reputations, and a national body like the Congress is a proper authority to advise all communities in this matter, if not to enforce Corrupt Practices Act as part of the unwritten law of the nation. My own belief is that both sides are working with an eye much more on the next decennial Census than on heaven itself, and I frankly confess it is on such occasions that I sigh for the days when our forefathers settled things by cutting heads rather than counting them.

Absorption or Conversion

The quarrels about *alams* and *pipal* trees and musical processions are truly childish; but there is one question which can

easily furnish a ground for complaint of unfriendly action if communal activities are not amicably adjusted. This is the question of the conversion of the Suppressed Classes if Hindu society does not speedily absorb them. The Christian missionary is already busy and no one quarrels with him But the moment some Muslim Missionary Society is organised for the same purpose, there is every likelihood of an outcry in the Hindu Press. It has been suggested to me by an influential and wealthy gentleman who is able to organise a Missionary Society on a large scale for the Conversion of the Su pressed Classes, that it should be possible to reach a settlement with leading Hindu gentlemen and divide the country into separate areas where Hindu and Muslim Missionaries could respectively work, each Community preparing for each year, or longer unit of time if necessary an estimate of the numbers it is prepared to absorb or convert. These estimates would, of course, be based on the number of workers and funds each had to spare, and tested by the actual figures of the previous period. In this way each community would be free to do the work of absorption and conversion or rather, of reform without chances of collision with one another. I cannot say in what light my Hindu brethren will take it, and I place this suggestion tentatively in all frankness and sincerity before them. All that I say for myself, is that I have seen the condition of the *kali paraja* in the Baroda State and of the Gonds in the Central Provinces and I frankly confess it is a reproach to us all. If the Hindus will not absorb them into their own society, others will and must, and then the orthodox Hindu too will cease to treat them as untouchables. Conversion seems to transmute them by a strong alchemy. But does this not place a premium upon conversion?

The Duty of the Press

Once more the best and surest remedy is a change in the spirit of proselytisation; but that cannot be expected with a press so unrestrainedly partisan as we have to-day in parts of India. I am myself a journalist, and you all know that I have undergone some little suffering for the sake of securing the free-

dom of the Indian Press. At least, I can claim the honour, if honour it be, to have figured in the leading case under the late lamentable Press Act, and it was I who started this fox even if I could not be at the kill. The removal of these external fetters makes it all the more necessary that we should exercise greater restraint than before over ourselves. But what I have seen of the Vernacular Press in the Punjab makes me apprehend that if it is not checked by the combined efforts of all Congressmen, it will make us sigh for the resurrection of that dead and damned piece of bucreauratic legislation. Not that the bureaucracy would find much in our Punjab papers to which it would be inclined to apply the provisions of the Press Act even if it were resurrected, for in the estimation of the bureaucrat the offence punishable under Section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code is not to be named in the same breath with that punishable under Section 124-A of that Code. And even though the Press Act is no more, the Penal Code and the Civil Courts, where damages can be claimed by officials financed by the Government for alleged defamation, serve the Government well enough, but the nation remains wholly unprotected, and it is up to us not to leave it so exposed. It was I who strongly urged the Hindu-Muslim Unity Committee last September to recommend to the Congress a resolution on the subject of the Press. The Congress was asked to instruct its Working Committee to issue a manifesto inviting the attention of the Indian newspapers to the extreme necessity of exercising great restraint when dealing with matters likely to affect inter-communal relations, and also in reporting events and incidents relating to inter-communal dissensions and in commenting upon them. I was asked to appeal to them not to adopt an attitude which might prove detrimental to the best interests of India and which might embitter the relations between different communities. It was also recommended to the Congress that its Working Committee might be instructed to appoint in each province a small Committee which should request such newspapers as publish any matter likely to create inter-communal dissensions that they should desist from following such a course of action, and that if, in spite of this friendly advice, no useful result were achieved, these Committees should proclaim such newspaper. If

even after this they did not alter their attitude, a boycott of them by Congressmen was to be declared in the last resort. The Congress adopted this resolution also, but I fear its executive has not yet had time to carry out the instructions issued by the Congress. The most important work that we have to do, apart from this of restoring Hindu-Muslim unity, is to organise an adequate permanent establishment for the Congress and its Provincial and Local Committees; for it is no use passing Resolutions in the Congress which cannot be attended to by the honorary executive for lack of a paid, permanent establishment.

Friends, you may perhaps say I have taken up too much of your time in describing and detailing what the Congress did at Delhi and have hardly any proposals to place before you today. My answer is that you need few fresh proposals if you are determined to carry out those which you have already accepted. At Delhi we were able to proclaim to the world that we were not satisfied with the existing state of affairs and that we were resolved to remain united. That itself cleared the air to a great extent; but this was not all. We had provided remedies essentially sound in principle for our national ills; only we have not so far and time to use them. We spent perhaps too much time in examining, analysing and criticising the resolutions we had passed at Delhi, and a large section of Congressmen has been kept busy by the elections. Unless you adopt other measures to restore the national unity, it will be the duty of your executive to carry out the measures already adopted. But your executive will fail to accomplish anything of lasting value unless it has your ungrudging support and active assistance. In fact, you are your own most effective executive, and as your servant specially nominated by you for the year that is now commencing I appeal to you to assist me in carrying out your own orders.

To the Indian Press I would address my most earnest appeal urging the Press to rise to the height of the occasion and not to disappoint the high expectations of one who is himself a journalist. When I was recently at Bijapur again and for the first time visited its famous dome, a, friend of mine who was as deeply impressed as myself by that wonderful pile, asked me in

a whisper right across the dome if Europe with all its boast of superiority had a whispering gallery such as that of the *Gol Gunbad.* It is no doubt a most astonishing experience to be able to hear distinctly across such a great space every-thing that is whispered, and the nine echoes space everything that gallery are equally remarkable. My friend was for the moment living the brilliant past of Bijapur over again and felt inordinate pride in the achievements of his Muslim ancestors. It was no doubt a great shock to him when I whispered back that the Whispering Gallery of Europe was even more marvellous. And then I told him that Europe's Whispering Gallery was the Press, its Fourth Estate ! Every lie softly whispered in the privacy of the Editor-Proprietor's sanctum was shouted across all the continents, increasing in pitch and volume with every reverberation till it ended in the united shriek of hundreds of millions, of fanatics and lunatics, leaving no chance for poor tongue-tied Truth to be heard. And yet it is just as easy to make the world resound with the thunderpeals of Truth as with the shrieks of Falsehood, and it is for the Indian Press to choose whether it will serve as the Whispering Gallery of Truth or Falsehood.

Swaraj and Foreign Aggression

Before I take final leave of the Hindu-Muslim question. I wish to declare that if India wins Swaraj it will satisfy all the religious requirements of a Muslim in India. Swaraj, Sarv-Raj or the Raj of all, implies Swadharma, and must imply that in an Eastern country. It is not therefore necessary that a Mussalman should sit on the throne of the Mughals at Delhi, and we have all seen how the greatest Muslim State has ceased to have a Royal Throne and has converted itself into a Republic. Every true Muslim looks back with pride upon the Thirty Years of the Truly Guided Khalifas during which the Successors of the Prophet and the Commanders of the Faithful (with whom Allah was pleased) were the Chief Servants of the Commonwealth. Islam spread over the major portion of the civilised world and its empire extended over all the continents of the known world; but no Muslim holds dear the memory of

Islam's later conquests and expansion as that of the first thirty years when it was the pride of the Muslim envoy to tell the envoys of the Byzantine and Iranian empires who had been boasting of the despotic power of their respective rulers that the Muslims had themselves appointed their ruler and would depose him just as readily if he acted against the Law of God. Victory has not been snatched from the jaws of defeat and despair by the valiant and God—fearing Turks to no purpose, and I feel confident that once they are free from the distractions inevitable after the victories both of war and peace they will revive with God's assistance the glories not of the Omayyide or Abbaside Empire, but of the first Thirty Years of the Khilafat before there were any kings or dynasts.

I have my own views of the possible adjustment of the relations of all Muslim States and the Khalifa, but this is not the occasion to state them. It would suffice if I state here that Mussalmans can satisfy all their religious requirements no matter who is their secular sovereign so long as they recognise that "there is no governance but God's," and that "Him alone are we commanded to serve." As in every religion, there are in Islam certain things which every Mussalman is required to do, and certain things which he is required not to do. Between these duties and prohibitions lies a vast stretch of ground in which he is free to roam about except for certain things which are in the nature of preferences. Now a Mussalman can obey no creature of God who commands him to neglect one of these duties or to disregard one of these prohibitions and it makes no difference whether that person is one of his own parents or his master or ruler, whether he is an enemy or a freind, or whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim. So long as the temporal power of Islam is adequate and is always at the disposal of the Khalifa, it matters little whether a Muslim is a subject of Muslim or a non-Muslim. All he needs is the fullest freedom to obey none but God in the matter of his religious duties and prohibitions. Even if a Muslim sovereign, nay, even if the Khalifa himself, commanded him to disobey God, he must refuse ; and it is obvious that he could

not render unto a non-Muslim Caesar what he could not render unto a Muslim Caesar because it was due only to God. This being so, I cannot understand why there need be any question of a Muslim's unflinching loyalty to a Swaraj and Swadharma government.

As for the bogey of His Majesty the Ameer of Afghanistan attacking India with the assistance of Indian Muslims, it is the creation of fear and cawardice, and can only be laid at rest by courage and self-confidence. I must say it did my heart good to hear my esteemed friend Pandit Jawaharlal say : "Let us win Swaraj and we shall see who comes." We shall certainly be ready to meet all comers and it will be easy matter to snatch away Freedom from the hands that have succeeded in winning it back after a century-and-a-half of slavery. As for myself, if India ever needs a humble soldier to resist an aggressor, be he the Muslim or non-Muslim your comrade whom you have to-day called out of the ranks will gladly fill his place in the ranks. He certainly will be no deserter.

Afghanistan

I have heard that my Madras speech of 1921 which had been considered in official circles to be highly treasonable, although it embodied nothing more or less than the sentiments my brother and I had expressed in a letter we had addressed from the Betul gaol to the Viceroy, had not found much favour even in Afghanistan. And I do not wonder that our Afghan neighbours feel a little hurt when they are so often described as if they were harbouring designs on India, If only we knew how difficult His Majesty the Ameer must be finding the task of organising his kingdom and developing its resources without the assistance of foreign personnel, we would not talk of the possibility of Afghan aggression. Afghanistan is enough to keep him and his government fully occupied without the additional worry of the problem of how a Kabul pony can swallow an Indian elephant. If the Afghans are hurt merely because I explained my own position in the event of a hypothetical aggression from Afghanistan, what must be my own feelings in having to explain

that position ? Because I am a Muslim, I have not ceased to be an Indian, and it is surely humiliating to any Indian's national pride to think that his fellow-countrymen regard his country and theirs as an easy prey for any foreign assailant no matter how weak.

"And the Fourth would knock me Down"

Friends, you will forgive me if I relate a story here which seems so applicable to our own situation. I have to preface it with a special apology to my Banya freinds because, whosoever may have been the author of the story, he had certainly lived in an age much anterior to ours when the most courageous leader that India has known in recent times happens to be no other than a Banya, and one of his chief lieutenants and lovers is "my brave Banya" as I call my dear friend Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. The story is that four travellers happened to meet each other on the road and agreed to travel together for safety's sake. It happened that after dusk they were met by some highwaymen who demanded the surrender of all their belongings. Then they discovered that their assailants were also only four. One of the travellers who was a Rajput whispered to his companion who was a Pathan that he could successfully tackle the biggest of the highwaymen. Thereupon the Pathan assured the Rajput that, for his part, he too could manage to deal with the next biggest. Thus encouraged the third of the travellers who was a middle-aged Brahmin said : "And I could knock down the third." Then came the turn of the fourth who was a Banya, and equally promptly came his declaration : "And the fourth would knock *me* down !" This led the Brahmin to apprehend that in that case he might be required to tackle not one but two, and he decided to give in. The Pathan too gave it in for fear he might have to deal with three assailants, and, finally the Rajput also surrendered because obviously he was no match for all the four. And all this because one traveller out of the four had felt just as convinced that the fourth highwayman would knock him down, his three companions were convinced that they could knock down one highwayman apiece !

Need of Courage and Confidence

May I not ask you, freinds, if it is not now time when we have a Banya for our brave leader for all of us to give up such conviction of defeat before the battle is joined ? Why, only recently a Delhi paper published the remarkable discovery of its Secret Investigator that a Delegation consisting of two aged Arabs and one young one who have come from Palestine with the permission of the Government to raise funds from Indian Mussalmans for the repair of the Masjid-ul-Aqsa and the Qubbat-us-Sakhra at Jerusalem is the vanguard of an invading force of Arabs ! Not with such fears and suspicions and tremors can Freedom be won. This, freinds, is the way to lose even the little we have. It reminds me of the curse of the Lord on Israel which is recorded in Deuteronomy :

"The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed and thou perish quickly.

Thy Lord shall curse thee to be smitten before thine enemies, thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them : and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

And thy carcase shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto beasts of the earth and no man shall fray them away.

The Lord shall smite them with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart :

And thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways : and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.

Thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein though shalt plant a vineyard and thou shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another

people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand.

The fruit of thine land and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always;

So that thout shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.

The stranger, that is within thee shalt get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

He shall lend to thee and thou shalt not lend to him : he shall be the head and thou shalt be the tail.

Morever, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed;

And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder and upon thy seat for ever."

The Turk's Message

The duty of the Mussalmans to-day is a double one. They owe a duty to themselves as Indians to secure freedom for themselves and for their posterity. India is no less their country than the Hindus' and even if the Hindus were to shrink from the sacrifices required in Freedom's battle, though they will certainly never do so, it would still be their duty to persevere and to say that they would win Swaraj for all India even if they received no aid from the rest of India. But as Mussalmans too they are to secure Swaraj for their country. When I met the Turks in Paris, in Switzerland and in Rome, they wondered how the same country that had despatched a large army, which included so considerable a proportion of Mussalmans, to fight against them could also send a delegation like ours

to plead for better terms for them after their defeat. When I solved this riddle for them by explaining the paradox that many of the Muslim warriors that were not afraid of the Turkish sword or the German gun any could pass months and years in those death-traps called trenches, were yet afraid of the policeman's truncheon and of police lock-ups and prison cells, my Turkish friends told me that in that case I must take the first boat back to India, and, instead of endeavouring to prevent their enslavement, I should go and break the fetters of my own countrymen. "We have beaten, the English," they said, "on the soil of Turkey and in the Straits; but we could not keep at bay ever your Indian hordes that pressed us hard in Palestine and in Mesopotamia. Once you are free and no Indian Muslim can any longer be driven to fight against the forces of Khalifa, both Turkey and Islam will be safe. It is your duty to us as well to yourselves that you first win freedom in your own country." But they added : "Let not your Hindu and Sikh fellow-countrymen think that they owe a duty only to themselves and none to us. It is in order to keep them enslaved that Britain has forged such heavy chains for us."

An Eastern Federation

Friends, I am glad to hear that so many of my Hindu fellow-workers are thinking of establishing a relationship with other Eastern countries. Their political ideas have scaled the ramparts of the Himalayas and the most of the surrounding seas. They recognise that the freedom of every Asiatic nation helps their own freedom, and they contemplate the organisation of an Eastern Federation. The first step had already been taken by Mahatma Gandhi when at Amritsar, he identified himself with the cause of the Khilafat. It would be a strange thing if while the Hindus set about organising an Eastern Federation Indian Mussalmans should cease to co-operate with them all because one newspaper correspondent realised in the sufferings of the Mussalmans at Saharanpur the tragic scenes enacted at Smyrna. Nothing could be more foolish and than more obscure this, and if the Turks ever came to hear of this comparison they would not feel an excess of gratitude for us.

A Final Question to the Mussalmans

But one question and one only I shall ask those who point to the episode of Saharanpur—where no doubt it is the Hindus that have suffered most—as a sufficient reason to veer round from Non-Co-operation to Co-operation. And that question in this : Was there no British Government ruling in India when Mussalmans had to undergo such unmerited sufferings ? Was a Hindu administering the district or even a Non-Co-operating Muslim ? Finally, was not the department of justice administered by a Mussalman who had broken away from the community of which he used to be a great leader at one time and had co-operated with the foreign Government ? These are not three separate questions, but one, *viz.*, if neither the Government nor those Mussalmans who co-operate with it were able to save the Mussalmans of Saharanpur, what prospect is there of any greater safety for them if these conditions are perpetuated by our co-operation ? I pause for an answer, but I fear I shall not get it

In the meantime, the Holy Land of Islam remains in the custody of non-Muslim mandatories. Five times a day every Mussalman who offers his daily prayers with regularity turns his face towards the Ka'ba. While I was still in the Bijapur gaol, a question occurred to me which I put into verse, and it still remains unanswered :

His Ka'ba facing which we were daily offering prayers, what shall we say to Him how it was left under the enemy's control ?

The Blow Recalled after the Fight

Freinds, I have said all that I could say on the Hindu-Muslim question and if after all this lengthy dissertation, I leave any Hindu or Mussalman still unconvinced of the necessity of Co-operation among ourselves and Non-Co-operation with our foreign masters, I can say no more and must acknowledge myself beaten. One thing is certain, and it is this, that neither can the Hindus exterminate the Mussalmans to-day nor

can the Mussalmans get rid of the Hindus. If the Hindus entertain any such designs they must know that they lost their opportunity when Mohamed bin-Qasim landed on the soil of Sindh twelve hundred years ago. Then the Mussalmans were few, and to-day they number more than seventy millions. And if the Mussalmans entertain similar notions, they too have lost their opportunity. They should have wiped out the whole breed of Hindus when they ruled from Kashmir to Cape Comrin and from Karachi to Chittagong. And as the Persian proverb says : the blow that is recalled after the fight must be struck on one's own jaw. If they cannot get rid of one another, the only thing to do is to settle down to co-operate with one another, and while the Mussalmans must remove all doubts from the Hindu mind about their desire for Swaraj for its own sake and their readiness to resist all foreign aggression, the Hindus similarly remove from the Muslim mind all apprehensions that the Hindu majority is synonymous with Muslim servitude. As for myself, I am willing to exchange my present servitude for another in which my Hindu fellow-countryman would be the slave-driver instead of the foreign master of my destiny; for by this exchange I would at least prevent the enslavement of 250 million of my co religionists whose slavery is only another name for the continued existence of European Imperialism. When at Lucknow in 1916 some Hindus complained to my late chief, Bal Gangadhar Tilak Maharaj, that they were giving too much to the Mussalmans, he answered back like a true and far-seeing statesman : "You can never give the Mussalmans too much." To-day when I hear complaints that that we are showing great weakness in harping on Hindu-Muslim unity when the Hindus show no desire to unite, I say : "You can never show too great weakness in your dealings with Hindus." Remember, it is only the weak who fear to appear too weak to others. With this observation I take my last leave of this question without a proper and a lasting settlement of which we can effect nothing.

Council-Entry

This was the main question to be dealt with at Delhi even though the Special Session was held in order to arrive at a settle-

ment of the Council-entry question. I have devoted so large a portion of my address to it not only because of its importance, but also because happily the other is no longer a live issue. At Delhi at my solicitation the Congress removed the ban and permitted those who had no religious or other conscientious objections against entering the Legislature or voting at the then forthcoming elections to do so, and suspended the propaganda in favour of the boycott of Councils which had achieved such signal success three years previously. The elections have been held, and it can, in my humble judgment, serve no useful purpose to re-open a question which kept us occupied in much sterile activity for more than a year and sorely tried our tempers. I hold strong views on the subject of the triple boycott of Councils, law-courts and schools and colleges, and did not shrink from giving expression to them in strong, or, as my Swarajist friends complained, perhaps in too strong language in the course of the discussion in the Subjects Committee at Delhi. I hold the same views to-day and would gladly give expression to them again in equally strong language if I could be convinced that it was necessary in the interests of the Congress and the country. But of this I am as little convinced as of the soundness of the Swaraj Party views, and, on the contrary, I am fully convinced that no word should escape me which would estrange from the Indian National Congress a single Indian who has any national feeling. In fact, I desire to take a leaf out of the book of the late Lord Morley, whose recent death has removed from the world one who had shown both courage and resource in asking his fellow-countrymen also to do such justice to India as he himself was capable of doing. "Let us rally the Moderates."

The Moderates and the Imperial Conference

I take no party view of the recent elections, and the franchise is far too restricted to read in them the judgment of the nation. But if one thing is more certain than another it is this, that India refuses to co-operate any longer with its foreign rulers or with those who co-operate with them. Many things have helped to disillusion those honest Nationalists who still

held the opinions which many of us held as recently as four years ago including Mahatma Gandhi. The discussions in the Imperial Council with regard to the status of Indian overseas have been so extensively advertised that it must be a very foolish fish that would still be deceived by the poor bait offered. South Africa where the Indian population still numbers 160,000 is adamant. The Imperial Government which cannot plead its impotence to interfere in the so-called "internal affairs" of the free Dominions when Kenya and other Crown Colonies are concerned, cannot hold out any hopes of reversing its palpably iniquitous decision, and has only consented to hear India's case once more. But the other Dominions are "sympathetic" since sympathy costs so little, and even here they are not quite optimistic where the Indians in British Columbia, of the "Komagata Maru" fame, still numbering some 1,100 are concerned, though the rest of Canada, which has only a bare hundred, is disposed to be generous. I am prepared to give the fullest credit to the impassioned advocacy and highly emotional appeals of Dr. Sapru and his victory has been complete. But, alas ! he had aimed so low from the very outset that his victory leaves such of us as could not like him feel the heat of the encounter uncomfortably cold.

It reminds me of a friend who had left a lucrative enough post, and, making a new departure for an up-country Muslim graduate, had started business as a commission agent in Bombay. One day he met me with every show of exultation, and announced that he had closed the day with cent per cent. profit in the transaction that had kept him so fully engaged. But when I asked for more details I learnt that my friend had sold a few dozen Japanese paper serviettes, and that the cent per cent profit would hardly pay the day's rent of his office ! After long and weary years of strife the Imperial Council passed in 1921 a Resolution recognising the desirability of conceding equal status to Indian overseas, but *Hamlet* was acted with the part of the Prince of Denmark carefully cut out by General Smuts, the Imperial Dramatic Censor. And yet India was asked to rejoice over her cent-per-cent profits. However, as it happened the profits remained unrealised, and two whole years

latter the battle had to be fought again over the Imperial counter. There were doubts about the nature of the bargain. Such as whether payment was only desirable or necessary, and here the slim Boer General wanted to rescind the entire transaction. But luck has favoured the travelling agents of India again, even though there was much disagreement among them and one of the two has made a discovery not less remarkable than that of Columbus inasmuch as he has discovered in the Boer General a skilfully disguised friend of India. We have secured cent-per-cent profits again, and a roving commission will go out to each of the partners in the other party's firm and by direct dealing ascertain what prospect there is of any payment. This, then, is the net gain. Dr. Sapru's travelling agents, no doubt some of the Great Unemployed, will have the great privilege of having direct dealings with the partners of John Bull, Sons, & Company. Lest I may be suspected of belitsling the results achieved, I quote the conclusion laboriously reached by the *Times* at the fag end of its leading article on "India and the Commonwealth." "The spirit of sympathy," concludes the *Times*, "and of good will expressed by the representatives of the British Government and of the Dominions Overseas, the sincere appreciation of the share of India in the Commonwealth —these are hardly less important to her than the practical recognition of her right to negotiate for herself with the other partners." Yes, Dr. Sapru and his royal companion have indeed secured "the practical recognition of India's right to negotiate for herself with the other partners" ; but when will the bargain be concluded and payment received, and—what will be its amount ?

Imperial Conferences will no doubt continue to succeed each other with great regularity, and the success of the Indian dependency at each will be advertised more and more extensively. In 1921, you know, they won something, which they said, was first-class citizenship. What are they going to win in 1923 ? They said : Implementation. When I was in jail, I was unable to know what this implementing was. This implementation is to try to bripg into some sort of realisation the Promise of

1921. But there is no change of that yet. Perhaps we shall have to attend many more conferences for that. But it is too much for poor human nature to wait patiently and continue to hope while the Imperial stratification proceeds from the Archean or Pre-Cambrian stratum through all the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, Cainozoic strata or divisions in their true order of antiquity, and the long list of sub-divisions, such as the Eocene, Oligocene, Miocene, and Pliocene, before we come to the Pleistocene or Glacial and finally to the Post-Glacial or Human period. No honest Moderate would be so moderate as to be satisfied with this crawling pace of our Imperial progress and no honest Liberal could be so liberal as to give unlimited time to England to do us bare justice, especially when they recognise, as they must more and more clearly as each day passes, that a wrong system of education is fast paralysing us and robbing us of our youth and manhood,

Friends, if our fathers, and still more, if our grandfathers had realised; as we realise to-day, the condition of our slavery, we should have been free even within a month. They had the power to be free, but they did not know that they were slaves. We, those few of us who are non-co-operators, recognise this that we are slaves. But we have not yet the power and the self-discipline that can achieve freedom

When their disillusionment is just as complete as ours, the question will still have to be answered : "How far are they prepared to go ? Non-co-operation has from the very outset required only the minimum sacrifice from the maximum number, though even the minimum in the Post-Gandhi era far exceeds the maximum in most cases of the Pre-Gandhi period. But Liberty can neither be won nor retained on the principle of Limited Liability. Dr. Sapru's advocacy may have been all that it could be, but what is there to follow it ? Only "resolutions", petitions and protests, and at best a silly *hartal* to wind up with ? If that is all, let us leave off this crazy pursuit of politics. Those whose ancestors have won freedom on the field of Runnymede or after the "crowning mercy" of Worcester or by razing

the Bastile to the ground may play with politics. We have yet to win our Magna Carta and our Bill of Rights, and it is premature for us to treat politics as a Western pastime. For long we thought in terms of the Penal Code, and now we think we have advanced very far on the road of Reform if we think in terms of Dicey and of Erskine May. We forget that we have still to think in terms of History ! I am prepared to admit that the Liberal gun is long enough. The length of the barrel, however, counts for little. It is the charge behind that matters. Once every Liberal or Moderate makes up his mind that patriotism must be to him as it was to every patriot in the world's history who won freedom for his country from a foreign yoke—a matter of unlimited liability, then—all is well. The Congress is his proper place even though he may at first proceed at a slow pace from force of habit. And it is just because I know that the leaders of the Swaraj Party are prepared to go to any length that I refused to be a party to driving them out of the Congress. I will challenge any man to tell me that Desabandu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru are not willing to make as many sacrifices as any of the best No changers including myself. I hold that their principles and methods are wrong. I know that they will not co-operate with the Government, but will co-operate with us. Because, they still stick to his path and love the Mahatma as much as we do, even though we pride ourselves upon the fact that we are the only ones who love him.

Bardoli and the Swaraj Party

It is true many of the Swarajists have retained to this day something (not all, please don't take offence), of their laboriously acquired Western mentality and revel in parliamentary discussions and debates. Many more who have willingly relinquished all thought of the use of force even for purposes of self-defence want the spice of this wordy warfare to make the insipid fare prepared at Bardoli piquant enough for their jaded palates. Let me tell yon an interesting anecdote, what a merchant told me in Calcutta. When the Mahatma and I, just before my incarceration, went to the Colootola street a merchant friend of mine came to us and told the Mahatma that he

had ruined him. "Are you dealing in piece-goods ?" asked the Mahatma. He replied : "No, I was dealing in British scents, scented soaps, pickles and jams." These are things that we Indians are consuming in larger quantities than even the Europeans themselves. The Mahatma remarked to him : "I never asked anybody to boycott these things, though I would be very pleased if they did." The merchant said : "All right. But do you think, Sir, that any man is going to spend Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 over a small scented bottle to put it over the dirty *khaddar* which you want all people to wear ?" Another said to the Mahatma that he put on khaddar one day and began to eat *pullav*. But he soon felt ashamed of himself and never liked to taste the dainty afterwards. That is the revolution that the Charkha and Khaddar have effected on human mentality. Many more still have not fully understood the almost unlimited possibilities of the *charkha* which must revolutionise Indian life while it frees us from economic slavery. Above all, the Swaraj party is the embodiment of the depression experienced by all India when Mahatma Gandhi, after having brought the country to the very door of Swaraj, suddenly had to declare that it was unwise to force that door by resorting to mass Civil Disobedience, and that his plan of action must be changed from an offensive bold to the verge of audacity to a defensive which to those who did not know our generalissimo looked almost like a surrender. But, as I told the Mahatma when I was passing through Bardoli on my way from Karachi gaol to the Bijapur gaol, his change of plan was out of his strength and not out of his weakness and had he been left free for some weeks longer he would have changed the face of the whole situation. He would have put new life into the Bardoi programme in spite of taking away all the aggressive features of the non-co-operation movement. He was, however, arrested and imprisoned before the people had recovered from the first depressing shock of Bardoli, and although there were hundreds and thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands and millions, who loved him and felt the pang of separation, apparently there was none who could put a new life into the Bardoli programme and make full use of the weapon of offence which the Government had

placed in Indian hands by treating the Mahatma as a felon. Friends, you may not have passed the Mahatma as a felon ! I have not sufficient data at my disposal to enable me to say whether the Mahatma was justified in listening to the despairing counsel of those who hastened to inform him that mass Civil Disobedience free from grave danger of violence was impossible after the Chauri-Chaura affair. But I do think Civil Disobedience free from such danger was possible immediately on the imprisonment of Mahatma Gandhi, and I would have deliberately disobeyed my chief and fought the Government with the weapon it had placed in my hand. No physician, as my brother says, is permitted to prescribe anything for himself when he is ailing, and after Mahatma Gandhi was "buried alive", it was enough if we paid due regard to his creed of Non-Violence, without having to carry out his testamentary injunction with regard to the suspension of Civil Disobedience also. Had such a course been followed, I doubt if the Swaraj party would have come into being.

Future Relations of the Congress and the Swaraj Party

Be that as it may, the existence of the Swaraj party cannot be ignored whatever view we may have formed about its genesis. I will not be free to speak to you. You may decide when the question arises. Its early beginnings were small enough, but the peregrinations of the Civil Disobedience Committee, which occupied the time, attention and energies of some of our best workers, also succeeded in diverting the attention of all from the work of construction, and drove many of the most zealous among our younger men into the group which sought to enter the Council. It is an idle speculation now, except to the extent that it helps us to formulate a plan for future work, to estimate how the chances of this group would have been affected if the programme of constructive work had been pushed forward and the younger men had been kept busy. On the other hand, some of my Swarajist friends also want me plunge into speculation and estimate how much greater would have been their success at the polls than it has already been if the Delhi self-denying ordinance suspending our boycott propaganda had been issued

at Gaya. I might answer them by suggesting another line of speculation based on characteristic self-conceit, *viz.*, whether there would have been any Swaraj party in existence at all if I had been permitted to be with them at Gaya to dissuade them from following a course of such doubtful wisdom. But all this is idle talk now.

The Swaraj Party is there to-day, and even though it may be composed of some very dissimilar elements, it is undoubtedly strong enough in numbers to-day and has always been strong in the quality of its leadership. More than all else, it was permitted at Delhi to go to the polls on its own moral and religious responsibility. It has gone there, and has achieved greater enough success considering what forces were arrayed against it, how short a time it had in which to organise its own forces and how greatly it was handicapped by the fact that some of its best members were disqualified from contesting the elections owing to their having undergone longer terms of imprisonment than those which do not affect eligibility. Then, too, electoral rolls were most defective, mainly perhaps because three years ago nobody but the Liberals cared for such things and until very recently even those who ultimately joined the Swaraj Party had not finally made up their minds to contest the elections or to go to the polls. It is true a very large number of votes have been given not to the individuals that sought them, but to the Congress, and,—"tell it not in Gath; whisper it not in the streets of Ascalon"—to Mahatma Gandhi himself ! There are friends of mine whose distress at such things is very deep, and who consider it a sacrilege thus to take the name of the Mahatma in vain. I greatly sympathise with them, and certainly cannot say that I approve of such political methods.

But it must be remembered that those to whom the people offered such notes were immeasurably nearer to Mahatma Gandhi than those who were opposed to them. Moreover, there were some among them who were inclined to sneer in a superior sort of way at a Mahatma so little versed in the affairs of this world as to pin his faith to the silly *charkha* which even

our womenfolk had discarded in these advanced days. I must here mention that my friend Deshbandhu Das has told me that he had never meant that the Mahatma had blundered. They thought that he was something of a bungler and a blunderer where finesse was required in dealing with the bureaucrats and with a Viceroy who was supposed to have out-Yankeed the Yankees during the War. Their election experiences must have convinced not a few of these men that the Mahatma's name is still one to conjure with, and that whatever skill in finessing they may possess, their strength even in the Councils lies in the backing which the people who loved and revered the Mahatma were prepared to give to them as his followers and associates. This experience is a valuable asset to them, and the good-sense, restraint and dignity which their leaders have shown in the hour of their victory in full conformity with our expectations from them, make them a valuable element in the Congress. It is true we have no such expectations from their programme as they have themselves; but, while removing, where really necessary any idea that may be lurking in the people's mind that it is not the constructive programme but the Councils that bring in Swaraj, we must give to the Swarajists a perfectly free hand, and add to that our heartiest good wishes that they may succeed. We suspended at Delhi the exercise of our right to carry on a propaganda of Council-boycott; but we surrendered no principle. Only the other day, while coming from Bombay, I had the privilege of being with my old freind, Mr. Vithalbhai Patel who wanted to talk to me about the Council--Entry question. I told him that I was not prepared to listen to anything that he might say in the Council nor agree to what he proposed to do. I plainly told him that I was not prepared to adopt the Swaraj Party programme. Nor are we prepared to do that to-day, as we shall no doubt be doing if we agree to accept any responsibility of guiding the Swarajists in the Councils. This we cannot do.

Obviously, the Swarajists will not be able to spare as much time for the constructive work as those of us who have not to attend to Council duties; but I have satisfied myself that their

responsible leaders intend to assist us to the best of their power and ability, and in this way strengthen their own hands also in the Councils. If they have to leave the Councils at any later stage, the work that will have by then been done outside in their constituencies through our joint efforts will ensure this much, that no bureaucratic Cromwell could say of their exit that not a dog barked when they took their departure. And if as a result of their labours in the Councils, Swaraj is achieved, I for one would certainly not refuse to accept it. If peace, harmony and goodwill were needed at Delhi to preserve the great reputation of the Congress, they are still needed to-day and needed in a greater measure to-day to enhance that reputation and to help us to carry out the constructive programme. Friends, I have reason to believe that the biggest shock of surprise that I ever gave to my enemies was, when I, the fighter, came out as a peace-maker at Delhi. They still very much wish to divide us on this Council-entry question. They want you to war.

The Constructive Programme

It was in the interest of this programme that I interested myself in the settlement at which we arrived at Delhi, for a whole year had been all but wasted by the major portion of the provinces in mutual recriminations, and if Mahatma Gandhi's release was to be obtained not by appeals *ad misericordium* but through our own efforts, it was necessary to resume the work to which the Mahatma had rightly pinned his faith. I did not at the time itself realise the full extent of the havoc wrought since his removal; but the few replies that I have received to my enquiries about the details of the work done are sufficient indications that through one cause or another little work has been done. It is true there are provinces like Gujarat the work of which does credit to my friend Srijut Vitlabhai Patel and to the band of devoted workers that Mahatma Gandhi left to work under him. Few provinces could show anything like as good a record of educational work, and but for Gujarat, the Khadi produced in other provinces would have remained unsold too long. Remember this. The

great glory of the Mahatma, however, was not that he changed the face of Gujarat, I know that it is difficult to change, but that he also changed the face of the whole of India. No province did he leave exactly where he had found it. Gujarat is even now preparing a surprise for those who think that no area could be fit for Civil Disobedience if the Mahatma's characteristically high standard of preparation was to be retained. We have to hear of Borsad yet. But the example of Gujarat has not proved infectious enough, and we cannot afford to wrap ourselves up in self-sufficiency. The speed of the fleet is the speed of the slowest boat, and there are alas! too many slow boats in our fleet, though, thank God, all are still sea-worthy. I could not place before my No-Change friends sounder canons of criticism than "A No-Changer" writing in *Young India* from Delhi has done :

"There is a limit (*he writes*) beyond which reason and argument cannot go. Some conclusions are in the nature of action, and they go beyond the pale of pure rationality. Where reason fails to persuade, experience becomes the hard task-master. We realised that we had arrived at such a crisis. One year of argument and paralysis, mind, they are their own words, was tending to harden men in their Pharisaism and self-complacency. The testing time had come not only on the Swarajists, not only on the Centrists, not only on Mohamed Ali, but on us also, the No-Changers. (I hope I am also a No-Changer.) We have to submit overselves to the discipline of facts. Since the days of the Calcutta Special Congress, Gandhism had won all along the line : and we, Gandhites, have been in continuous peril of loose thinking and draggled effort. It is good for everybody to be beaten. If there is truth in us, the very castigation of defeat will lead us to examine overselves anew and find strength. If, on the contrary, Gandhism has become in our hands a plea for lethargy and refusal to re-think the implications of fast-developing reality, we are not the true followers of our Chief, we are not worthy to be the custodians of his message to the world. Reality—that is the ultimate touchstone."

Yes, Reality is the ultimate touch-stone, the truest and the

surest that ever existed and Swarajists and No-Changers and you and I, all of us, friends shall be tested and measured by Reality. That is why I preach to you the gospel of work. It is not as easy a gospel to practise as it is easy to preach, and that is why we have more critics than workers. But work well done furnishes an exhilarating experience which the sterile pleasures of criticism even in victories can never equal. As the Sanskrit poet, referring to the creative effort of poetry, says : "Little does the barren woman know of the pain and anguish of a mother's labours and still of the indescribable joy of motherhood at the sight and touch of the new-born babe." Through labour alone shall a free India be re-born.

The Bardoli Programme to be Carried Out

You will no doubt ask me what should be our work; and my reply after the most careful consideration is that we cannot better the much-maligned Bardoli programme. If we continue to give up each item of work on finding difficulties and obstacles in our way, we shall never accomplish anything. Many people tell you Non-Co-operation has failed when they only mean that they, or we, both, have failed to rise to the height of our ideal. And yet, as I have already told you the steps proposed by the Mahatma are easy. Remember what the commonest of common soldiers is prepared to sacrifice when you feel that you must re-start your practice as a lawyer, or file your law-suit, or send your boy to a better-equipped but co-operating school.

Khadhi Work and Women

As for the man who cannot even wear khadi, it is no use taking him into serious consideration. And yet he is not unpatriotic, nor hopelessly selfish, but only lazy and indolent. Well, he has got to be roused out of his indolence, and the best and the most unfailing agency for this is the womanhood of India. Whatsoever may change and fall from the high ideal of our great chief, the women of India are true to him, true to the nation and true to themselves. With a few expert men like

Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Maganlal Bhai and Chaganlal Bhai, Gandhi to assist and advise them, and a full complement of book-keepers and clerks, etc., our sisters should be able to take the entire charge of the Khadi work in every province and district. Men may go to gaol, and men may come back, but women of India should go on working our Khadi department for ever.

The other departments must also be organised, and the next in importance to Khadi is the department of National Education. I feel sorry that I did not press sufficiently hard at Bezwada, in 1921, for the creation of a Central Board of Education. But now a Central Educational Board and Provincial Boards must be created, and the education of our boys and girls must be seriously taken in hand. I need not go through the whole list of departments, for we cannot afford to neglect any item of the Bardoli programme. But we must follow the plan of 1921, and, while working all simultaneously, we must concentrate on particular departments during particular periods of the next year. Our women folk must go on with the Charkha for ever while men might go back to jails and return from them. Friends, I have proposed to you something much more important. It is a most beneficial suggestion. We have scores of unemployed people, people who have left their practice : clever men, honest men; they have all come out at the bidding of the Mahatma. On the other hand, we find that there is plenty of work to do, but no workers to do it. The only solution, I say, the best possible solution is this. Give the job to the man without a job. Let us have a permanent secretariat. When we are fighting a big Empire is it not a shame to us that my freind Mr. Gopalakrishnaya, the Working Secretary, has not a secretariat even as small as in a district. We must have a large permanent establishment to do executive work of the Congress, no matter who goes to the jail or who does not. These people must be given bare living wages. Of course, our Governors will sneer at them. Rs. 10,000 will sneer at Rs. 100. Rs. 25,000 will sneer at Rs. 250 a month. The Lee Commission's witnesses, those Oliver Twists, who have had too much and are

still greedily shouting for more and more, would, of course, refer to us as cheats. A system that would require matyrs to day would be worked by cheats tomorrow. What do the Europeans in South Africa say? It is not a question of colour at all, it is the Indian standard of living. They want our standard of living to be raised. Our Mahatma has greatly reduced it. The lower it goes, the better the people practise plain living and high thinking. These gentlemen do not live painly and I know the depth of their degradation of thoughts. It is they that would sneer at us. But let us have a permanent secretariat for the Congress and send out our workers into the provinces. There should be a Khadi Committee, Temperance Committee, an Untouchability Committee, etc. All these departments should be carefully organised and then let us fight the battle of India. When India knows that we are going to do all this work on an organised basis, she will pour out her funds. She would readily give us a crore in one month, while she gave it to the Mahatma in 3 months. I was told in the Subjects Committee that we should abolish the four-anna franchise, because it does not bring enough finance. If this is done, a few hundreds of men will sit together and manage the whole of the Congress. I want the whole of the Congress to be carried on by the four-anna members only. If we get one crore of members in one year, we can have 25 lakhs of rupees by the way of membership subscriptions. Once this machinery is set up and these men go on collecting subscriptions, I would put forward the system prevailing in England,—one week's board and lodging for actual work done and then think of next week's; otherwise you starve.

The Provision of Funds

But all this is idle task without funds, and the provision of funds is one item which requires concentration all through the year. When the country knows that it is only by carrying out the Mahatma's programme of work that we can manufacture the key of Yerrowada gaol, and that no work is possible

without solvency, it will not fail to respond to our call. But apart from large donations to be appealed for at some fixed time, we must tap permanent, though small, sources of revenue, and enable the poor to go on contributing their mites to the National Chest. Fixed monthly contributions must be arranged for and other similar means of securing the poor man's assistance at intervals and in ways suited to his convenience must be thought out in addition to a well-organised national 'drive' for securing at least as many members of the Congress as the number of Indians who have been enfranchised. If, however, we work with a will, a full crore should not prove too many.

Permanent Secretariat and Departmental Establishments

And yet much as money may be necessary for working the Mahatma's programme, a powerful organisation is just as necessary to secure money. This cannot be in the main an organisation run by unpaid men. It is astonishing how we got on so long with our national work covering the whole area of this sub-continent with a paid establishment hardly large enough for a single department in a single district. We are face to face with a strange situation. On the one side, we need competent, zealous and thoroughly reliable workers to carry on the national work, and have not got them. On the other hand, we have an army of the unemployed, particularly the lawyers, who have been so hard hit by the non-Co-operation programme, and they are very far from being unemployable. It is time that we accepted the obvious and the only opossible solution of this double difficulty. We may pay our workers only a living wage on the reduced scale of the era; but that living wage must be paid to those splendid workers who have made great sacrifices for the sake of the nation. Remember, a system that requires martyrs to work it gets worked in the next generation by cheats. And, in any case, even martyrs have to be fed and clothed before they quit this world. India is witnessing to-day the spectacle of greedy foreign servants clamouring like so many Oliver Twists for more when they have already had much more

than even gluttony as a rule demands. The Indian Civil Servant, who is seldom Indian, or civil, or a servant, already gets paid more than any class of public servant of similar merit anywhere else in the world. It is he who always sets the pace to members of other services and thus continues to drain the resources of one of the poorest countries in the world. And he is doing this again so soon after the last increase in his emoluments. And yet it is he who accuses Indians engaged in the service of the nation of dishonest practices. I have no doubt that the moment he learns that the Congress is asked to pay the poorest of poor wages to such national workers, he and his supporters in the Press will commence their old game of vilifying men who are the truest servants of India. Those who receive their wages in hundreds will be assailed by those who receive them in thousands and yet serve India so poorly. But this is part of the day's work and we must not mind it.

This, to my mind, is the most urgent need of the Congress, and I trust you will take steps to create an efficient organisation which will carry on the work of the Congress year in and year out. A proper National Secretariat, if possible located in some central place like Delhi, similar Provincial Secretariats and District Offices must be organised, and work in these secretariats and offices must be properly differentiated into the various departments which we need to maintain. The Working Committee itself should be composed of men who are able to attend frequent meetings either at a central place, or wherever required by the exigencies of the moment.

Of course, we must see that all organisations are doing practical work which is capable of being checked and estimated, and, that expenditure is not allowed after the initial month or thereabouts, to exceed revenue. I understand that the Salvation Army in England when it sends out workers to new centres pays them for a week's board and lodging in advance, and during that week they have to earn enough to pay their way in the following week. Later on, they are required to send a definite contribution to the Central Organisation. We shall have to follow some such system with regard to those of our workers

who are engaged in enrolling Congress members. Once this machinery is set up, I feel confident that the country can be roused again, and we shall be able to beat in 1924 the record of 1921. Remember, there is one great difference between now and 1921. Then, the Mahatma was free to organise and control the work, but to day although we shall miss him greatly, his very absence from our midst should stimulate us to work with redoubled energy What would Christianity be without the Cross and Islam without the Tragedy of Kerbala ? As I have said before we have not yet made full use of our Cross. Friends, let us do it now if we bear any love towards our absent leader, and, calling upon the nation to give us its full backing, free the Country and break open the great Bastile which keeps Mahatma Gandhi and thousands of his disciples in chains.

The Sikhs and the Maharaja Saheb of Nabha

We have before us the example of our Sikh brothers whose courage, fortitude and, above all perfect non-violence excite my envy. The Maharaja Saheb of Nabha has been deposed, and the words in which the head of this foreign Government proclaims to us his firm resolve to keep him out of his State are only so much veiled blasphemy :

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

We hold no brief for the Maharaja Saheb, but this much is certain, that even if all that his detractors say of him be true, he was not deposed for any such shortcomings, but for his virtues. I am myself the subject of an Indian Ruler and have had fairly intimate experience of several Indian States. But I used to put them off with the observation that the Indian States are our own, even though to-day they may prove far more unsafe for patriotic men than the rest of India. I used to add that once the rest of India had won Swaraj, Indian States would undergo a sea-change with astonishing rapidity. In the mean-

time it should be our policy not to rouse the suspicions of the rulers of these States, and to avail ourselves of every opportunity to prove to them that we are not unmindful of their difficulties nor indifferent to what they, too, have to suffer from this foreign bureaucracy. I did not know at the time that the Government would provide such an opportunity so soon. But now that it has been provided let us avail ourselves of it, for in doing so we shall also be safeguarding the interests of religion. The Maharaja Saheb of Nabha has suffered, at least partly, because he strongly sympathised with his co-religionists in their efforts to free themselves from the foreign bureaucratic incubs, and to reform their sacred Gurudwaras. And the Sikhs in their turn are suffering because they have had the courage to stand up for one of our Indian Rulers whom the bureaucracy desires to keep in perpetual dependence upon itself. But, as I have said before, the recent action of Government in declaring the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and the Akali Dal to be unlawful assemblies is a blow aimed not only at those bodies, or at the entire Sikh community; it is a challenge to the entire nation. Each community that dares to live will be similarly dealt with if we shrink from accepting the challenge to-day, and it will only be a question, of whose turn at the tumbrils will come next ?

Civil Disobedience

We have already resolved to offer some assistance to our Sikh brethren so that we may not be guilty of indulging in lip-sympathy only. But something more than that is required. A better opportunity for Civil Disobedience at least on a provincial scale never presented itself since the arrest of the Mahatma, but each province is divided against itself and it is no use disguising from ourselves the fact that to organise Civil Disobedience is no easy matter. We must be sure of our capacity to undergo unlimited sufferings, and since constructive work has not been done this year even as well as done in 1921, there is little to indicate how much suffering the nation is prepared to endure. If, however, we resume our constructive work with redoubled energy, Civil Disobedience will not remain a mere

possibility, and the Civil Disobedience Committee appointed at Delhi will then be able to do much more fruitful work. For it must also be recognised that Civil Disobedience must be resorted to before Swaraj can be won. Let there be no mistake about this. There must be no shrinking from sacrifice, and this observation I would like to address in particular to such of my friends as have already undergone imprisonment for courageously standing up for their rights. If that experience makes them shrink from doing such work as may lead to a second period of imprisonment, then, I say, they are not the men for us. The first imprisonment is obviously wasted upon them, for they should never have undertaken to do any national work, or should, at least, have made apologies to their foreign masters as soon as they were punished. To have undergone all this suffering and then to repent is the height of folly. As I wrote in the Bijapur gaol :

"If there is a sin even greater than sinlessness it is repentance over sin after the award of punishment."

The Short Cut to Liberty

Friends, I have given you a long enough programme of work, and I cannot help it if it is a little too insipid for your tastes. There is no royal road to Liberty. But there is one short cut, and that is the readiness to follow the road to the grave. Death for a great cause provides the most piquant sauce for the most tasteless dish, and I make bold to say that if our Working Committee took it into its head one day to resolve that all its members should prepare themselves to die and that the resolution was not only a 'resolution' merely according to conventional phraseology, but embodied the members' grim determination, I could guarantee them Swaraj within a year. (Hear, hear). And if it was the All-India Congress Committee that made such a resolve for itself, instead of quarrelling about Council-entry (laughter), Swaraj could be won within a month. But, friends, Swaraj is in your hands and can be won to-day if each of you resolves to be ready to die at the country's call. If, however, we are not prepared to do this, and object to the

Bardoli programme because it is dull and drab, *Charkha apkhars*, then it is useless to talk of changing the Congress creed....In 1921 we gave a year to ourselves and the same period to the Government; but our part of the contract was not fulfilled, and we could not demand Swaraj as the price of our unfinished work. Let us go back to Nagpur, and with trust in our Maker and a prayer addressed to Him to give us courage, fortitude, preseverance and wisdom, begin the great work once more that our great leader has outlined for us. If only we do not prove unworthy of him, we shall win back our lost liberty and it will not be as a prayer for success, but as the declaration the announcement of victory won, that we shall then raise the old, old cry ; Mahatma Gandhi ki iaj

3

MEANING OF SWARAJ

Dear Countrymen,

It was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me today. The unique honour for this year should have been bestowed upon Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, who did such wonderful work both in Kenya and South Africa. But it was not to be. The developments, both internal and external, have necessitated my acceptance of the burden. I know that I shall have your support in my attempt to do justice to the high office to which you have called me.

At the outset, let me note with respectful feelings the deaths during the year of Bi Amman, Sir Asutosh Mukerji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramaniam Iyer and Mr. Dal Bahadur Giri at home, and of Messrs. Rustomjee and P. K. Naidu in South Africa. I tender in your name my respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

Retrospective

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally an institution for developing strength from within. It has ceased to function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government for redress of grievances. It did so because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of Government. The breach of faith with the Mussalmans of India was the first rude shock to the people's faith in the Government.

The Rowlatt Act and O'Dwyerism, culminating in the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, opened the eyes of the people to the true

*Presidential address delivered by Mahatma Gandhi at the Belgaum Congress held on 26-27 December, 1924.

nature of the system. At the same time it was realised that the existence of the system depended upon the co-operation, whether conscious or unconscious, and whether voluntary or forced, of the people. With the view, therefore, of mending or ending the system it was decided to try to begin withdrawing voluntary cooperation from the top. At the special Session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1920 the boycott of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, lagislative bodies, and foreign cloth was resolved upon. All the boycotts were more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-cooperation movement. Though, not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institution boycotted.

The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. Whilst it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was soon discovered that the non-violence was only skin deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of intolerance against those who did not co-operate. This was violence of a subtler type.

In spite, however, of this grave defect I make bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have broken out, had not non-violent non-cooperation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-cooperation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though, therefore, non-violent non-cooperation has not brought us Swaraj, though it has brought about certain deplorable results and though the institutions that were sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-cooperation as a means of attaining political freedom has come to stay and that even its partial success has brought us nearer

Swaraj. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

A Halt

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt. For whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-cooperation, the majority of those who are immediately concerned, have practically lost faith in it, with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up Council have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council-entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up Government schools and colleges have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear that Government schools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission.

In these circumstances these boycotts cannot be worked as part of the National programme, unless the Congress is perpared to do without the classes directly affected. But I hold it to be just as unpracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-cooperators out. They must both remain in the Congress, without either party interfering with or hostility criticising the other. What is applicable to Hindu-Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to the unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-cooperation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us, Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in. You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.

Foreign Cloth Boycott

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend the word

'Boycott' has been changed in the agreement into 'refusal to use foreign cloth.' There is no doubt a bad obour about the word 'Boycott'. It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned, I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasises the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts such as personal abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness etc., are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill-will.

I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from goodwill and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that has ruined the Indian peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live.

The plan, therefore, is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice-looking foreign fabric and also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-

spinning and hand-weaving, i.e., khaddar not only saves the peasant's money but it enables us, workers, to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self reliant.

Organisation of Khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organisation. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If therefore this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain, and as Britain is today the predominant world-power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is wrong and immoral for a nation to supply for instance intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufatcure in the country to which foreign grain or cloth are exported results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and often more so because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

Britain's Duty

It is then I hold the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to regulate her imports with due regard to her own

welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

Foreign Versus British

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about anyhow of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence.

Objections Considered

But, say the critics, the spinning wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the middle ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic march of scientific knowledge for which machinery

stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is that we have not given the spinning wheel enough trial; I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All-India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of resolutions on hand-spinning which they themselves have passed from time to time. The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances, it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning wheels. They are managed by men.

It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the future will always have to keep some men at the spinning wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which as a cottage industry it must have. I must inform you that the progress, the mechanism of the wheel has made, would have been impossible, if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

Machinery

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1900 miles, long, 1500 miles broad.

Spinning Franchise

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning

wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured to present it for introduction in the franchise, and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the Swaraj Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am however thankful for what the Swaraj party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

No Other Message

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of Swaraj if it is to be by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. As I have already remarked it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by Civil Disobedience. But Civil Disobedience for the attainment of Swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth.

You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress, if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty is not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say 'No'. Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards Swaraj.

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question because the necessity of it is al-

most universally accepted. I say 'almost' because I know some Hindus and some Mussalmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Mussalmans India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation in which Hindus made common cause with their Muslim berthren and the non-cooperation that followed it, caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-cooperation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travested. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indefference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame I have not the material for the task even if I was minded for it.

Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussalman majority. They have in so far as is possible under a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority, as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government and would resolutely decline to go back till Mussalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a Swaraj Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign, in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no Swaraj Government with any pretention to being a popular Government can possibly be organised and maintained on a war footing. A Swaraj Government means a Government established by the free joint will of Hindus, Mussalmans and others. Hindus and Mussalmans, if they desire Swaraj, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All-Parties' Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

Untouchability

Untouchability is another hindrance to Swaraj. Its removal

is just as essential for Swaraj as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindu cannot claim or take Swaraj till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed classes. They have sunk with the latter's suppression. Historians tell us that the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindustan precisely as the English invaders treat us, if not much worse. If so, our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class. The sooner we remove the blot, the better it is for us, Hindus. But the priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I am certain that the priests are wrong.

It is a blasphemy to say that God set apart any portion of humanity as untouchable. And Hindus who are Congressmen have to see to it that they break down the barrier at the earliest possible moment. The Vaikom satyagrahis are showing us the way. They are carrying on their battle with gentleness and firmness. They have patience, courage, and faith. Any movement in which these qualities are exhibited becomes irresistible.

I would however warn the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees new-a-days of exploiting the suppressed classes for a political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us, 'superior' Hindus, to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our down-trodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression.

Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. That religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is light, not darkness. God is love, not hate. God is truth, not untruth. God alone is Great. We, His creatures are but dust. Let us be humble and recognise the place

of the lowliest of His creatures, Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else. Love is the root of religion or sacrifice and this perishable body is the root of religion gion, says Tulsidas. Whether we win Swaraj or not, the Hindus have to purify themselves before they can hope to revive the Vedic philosophy and make it a living reality.

Swaraj Scheme

But the spinning wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability are only means to an end. The end we do not know. For me it is enough to know the means. Means and, end are convertible terms in my philosophy of ilfe. But I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagvan Das that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of Swaraj, i.e., the scheme of Swaraj which all India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All-Parties' Conference is charged with that mission and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points ?

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work, such for example as suggested for the Congress Franchise. Literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish, to take part in the government and the well-being of the State.

2. The ruinous military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.

3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decisions of these Panchayats to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case-law should be

abolished and the general procedure should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbrous and worn out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.

4. Revenues from intoxication liquors and drugs should be abolished.

5. Salaries of the Civil and Military Service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.

6. There should be redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy as possible for every provinces for its internal administration and growth.

7. Appointment of a commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.

8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these States who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in Self-governing India.

9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.

10. The highest post be open to all who may be otherwise fit Examinations for the Civil and Military Services to be in India.

11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislatures and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal to be Hindustani; the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and the Central

Legislature to be also Hindustani. The language of international diplomacy to be English.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of Swaraj as I would have it. We may not have the power today to take or receive or do the things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a Swaraj scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

Independence

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectively honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want under every conceivable circumstance complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off.

I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather that independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally indepen-

dent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

The Swaraj Party

So far, then, I have considered the contents of the agreement and the general questions arising from it. Not much need be said about the status of equality given to the Swaraj party. I wish I could have avoided it, not because the party is not worthy, but because I do not share its views about Council-entry. But if I must remain in the Congress, even lead it, I must recognise the facts as they are. It was easy enough for me to go out of the Congress or to decline the honour of presiding. but it was not, (so I thought and still think, in the interest of the country for me to take that step.

The Swaraj Party represents if not a majority, at least a strong and growing minority in the Congress. If I was not to divide the Congress minority in the Congress, I was bound to agree to its conditions, so long as they were not in conflict with my conscience. They are not in my opinion, unreasonable. The Swarajists want to use the name of the Congress for their policy. A formula had to be found for their doing so without their pledging or binding the changers to their policy. One of the ways of doing it was to give it the authority and the responsibility financial and executive with regard to the framing and the prosecution of their policy. The Congress as a whole could not guide that policy without sharing the responsibility. And as I could not take the responsibility, and as I apprehend no No-changers can. I could not be party to shaping the policy, nor could I shape it without my heart in it. And the heart can only go where the belief is.

I know that the sole authority to the Swaraj Party to use the name of Congress in regard to the Council programme makes somewhat awkward the position of the other parties wishing to join the Congress. But I fear it is inevitable. The Swaraj Party cannot be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all, it wants the advantage not for itself but for the service of the country. All parties have or can have that ambition or no other. I hope therefore that the others will join the Congress and work within to affect the course of country's policy. Dr. Besant had led the way in that direction. I know that she would have many things done otherwise, but she is content to come hoping to bring round the electorate to her view by working within the Congress. The No-changers can, in my humble opinion, vote for the agreement with a clear conscience. The only national programme jointly to be worked by all the parties is khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, for the Hindus, removal of untouchability. Is not this after all what I want ?

Purely Social Reform

It has been suggested that this programme turns the Congress into a purely social reform organisation. I beg to differ from that view. Everything that is absolutely essential for Swaraj is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress. It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only. But it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction, or as I have therwise described it the work of internal growth.

Nor does the agreement exhaust the list of constructive items that the Congress must handle. Those I am about to mention are of the highest importance, but they, being non-contentious and not absolutely essential for Swaraj as the foregoing three items, find no mention in the agreement.

National Schools

One such is the maintenance of national educational institutions. Probably the public do not know that next to

khaddar the running of national educational institutons has been the most successful. These can not be given up so long as even a few pupils are left. It must be a point of honour with the respective provinces to keep up their colleges and schools. Suspension of non-cooperation should not have any injurious effect on these institutions. On the contrary, greater effort than ever before should be made to maintain and strengthen them.

Most provinces have their national schools and colleges. Gujarat alone has a national university, maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000 and having control of 3 Colleges and 70 Schools with 9,000 pupils. It has acquired its own ground at Ahemdabad and has already spent Rs. 2,05,323 in buildings. Throughout the country, finest and silent work has been done by the non-cooperating students. Theirs is a great and noble sacrifice. From a wordly standpoint they have perhaps lost the prospect of brilliant careers. I suggest to them however that from the national stand-point they have gained more than they have lost. They left their schools or colleges, because it was through them that the youth of the nation were insulted and humiliated in the Punjab.

The first link in the chain of our bondage is forged in these institutions. The corresponding national institutions however inefficiently managed they may be, are the factories where the first instruments of our freedom are forged. After all, the hope of the future centres round the boys and girls studying in these national institutions. I, therefore regard the upkeep of these institutions as a first charge on provincial funds. But these institutions to be truly national must be clubs for promoting real Hindu Muslim unity, they must be also nurseries for training Hindu boys and girls to regard untouchability as a blot upon Hinduism and a crime against humanity. They should be training schools for expert spinners and weavers. If the Congress retains its belief in the potency of the spinning wheel and khaddar, one has a right to expect these institution to supply the science of the spinning wheel. They should be also factories for khaddar production. This is not to say that the boys and

the girls are not to have any literary training. But I do maintain that the training of the hand and the heart must go hand-in-hand with that of the head.

The quality and the usefulness of a national school or college of its scholars but by the strength of the national character, and will be measured not by the brilliance of the literary attainments, deftness in handling the carding bow, the spinning wheel and the loom. Whilst I am not most anxious that no national school or college should be closed, I should not have the slightest hesitation in closing down a school or college, that is indifferent to the admission of non-Hindu boys or that shuts its door against the entry of untouchables or that has not carding and spinning as an indispensable part of the training.

Time is past when we can be satisfied with word 'national' on the sign board of the school and the knowledge that it is not affiliated to any Government University or is not otherwise controlled by the Government. I must also not omit to point out that the tendency in many national institutions still is to neglect the Vernaculars and Hindustani. Many teachers have not realised the necessity of imparting instruction through the vernaculars or Hindustani. I rejoice to observe that Sjt. Gangadhar Rao has arranged a meeting of national educationists to exchange experiences on the several points mentioned by me and to evolve, if possible, a general plan of education and action.

Unemployed Non-Cooperators

This is perhaps the proper place to mention those lawyers who have given up practice, school masters and other government employees who have given up Government service at the call of the nation. I know that there are many such men who find it hard to make the two ends meet. They deserve the national support. The Khadi Board and the national schools and colleges are the two services that can take in almost an unlimited number of honest and industrious men who are willing to learn and labour and are satisfied with a modest allowance. I

observe a tendency not to accept any remuneration for national service. The desire to serve without remuneration is praiseworthy, but all cannot satisfy it. Every labourer is worthy of his hire. No country can produce thousands of unpaid whole-time workers. We must, therefore, develop an atmosphere in which a patriot would consider it an honour to serve the country and accept an allowance for such service.

Intoxicants

Another item of national importance is the liquor and the opium traffic. Had the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance remained non-violent, we would today have witnessed a progressive improvement. But unfortunately our picketting degenerated into violence, veiled when it was not open. Picketting had, therefore, to be abandoned and the liquor-shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But you will be pleased to hear that the temperance work has not died out altogether. Many workers are still continuing their quiet and self-less service in the cause of temperance We must, however, realise that we would not be able to eradicate the evil till we have Swaraj. It is no matter of pride to us that our children are being educated out of the revenue derived from this immoral source. I would almost forgive the Council-entry by Congressmen if they would boldly sweep out this revenue even though education may have to be starved. Nothing of the kind should happen if they will insist on a corresponding reduction in the military expenditure.

Bengal Repression

You will observe that in the foregoing paragraphs I have confined myself to the internal developments. But the external circumstances, and among them chiefly the acts of our rulers, are affecting our destiny no less surely (though it may be adversely) than the internal development. We may turn them to advantage if we will or we may succumb to them to to our disadvantage. The latest act of rulers is the repression commenced in Bengal. The All-Parties' Conference condemned it in no uncertain terms. The Conference had hesitation in saying that

the blow was aimed at the Bengal Swaraj Party. But I have none, I have been to Calcutta and had the opportunity of meeting men representing a variety of opinion and I came to the conclusion that the blow was aimed at the Swaraj Party. The opinion is confirmed by the speeches since delivered by Lords Lytton and Reading. The defence they have offered is wholly unconvincing. Such a defence is possible only in a place like India where public opinion counts for little or nothing. Lord Lytton's conditions of release are an insult to our intelligence. Their Excellencies beg the question when they tell us that the situation warranted the Ordinance and the action under the Regulation of 1818. The national contention is :

1. That the situation they describe has not been proved to exist;

2. That assuming that the situation does exist, the remedy is worse than the disease;

3. That the ordinary law contains enough powers for dealing with the situation; and lastly

4. That even if extraordinary powers were necessary they should have been taken from the legislature which is of their own creation.

The speeches of their Excellencies evade these issues altogether. The nation which has had considerable experience of unsupported statements of the Government will not accept them as gospel truth. Their Excellencies know that we cannot and will not believe their statements not because they are wilfully untruthful, but because the sources of their information have often been discovered to be tainted. Their assurances are therefore a mockery of the people. The speeches are almost a challenge to us to do our worst. But we must not be irritated to be impatient. Repression, if it does not cow us down, if it does not deter us from our purpose, can but hasten the advent of Swaraj: for it puts us on our mettle and evokes the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of danger. Repression does for a true man or a nation what fire does for gold.

In 1921 we answered repression with Civil Disobedience and invited the government to do its worst. But today we are obliged to eat the humble pie. We are not ready for civil disobedience. We can but prepare for it. Preparation for civil disobedience means discipline, self restraint, a non-violent but resisting spirit, cohesion and above all scrupulous and willing obedience to the known laws of God and such laws of man as are in furtherance of God's laws. But unfortunately we have neither discipline nor self-restraint enough for our purpose, we are either violent or our non-violence is unresisting, we have not enough cohesion and the laws that we obey, whether of God or man. we obey compulsorily. As between Hindus and Mussalmans we witness a daily defiant breach of laws both of God and man. This is no atmosphere for Civil Disobedience—the one matchless and invincible weapon at the disposal of the oppressed. The alternative is undoubtedly violence. We seem to have the atmosphere for it. Hindu Muslim fights are our training for it.

And those who believe that India's deliverance lies through violence are entitled to gloat over the free fights that take place between us. But I say to those who believe in the cult of violence, 'You are retarding India's progress. If you have any pity or friendly feeling for the starving millions, know that your violence will do them no service. Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organised than you are. You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death. You know that this Government believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence. Whatever may be true of other countries, there is no chance of the cult of violence flourishing in this country. India is admittedly the best repository and exponent of non-violence. Will you not better devote your lives if you sacrifice them in the cause of non-violence ?

I know, however, that my appeal to the violent revolutionaries will be just as fruitless as any such appeal to the violent and anarchical Government is likely to be.

We must, therefore, find the remedy and demonstrate to both, the violent Government and the violent revolutionries that there is a force that is more effective than their violence.

Repression, A Symptom

I regard this repression as chronic symptom of achronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as white *vs.* Black, Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the "white man's burden. In the Malaya peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would today drive out every Indian if it safelv could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless; they are unwilling or not so inhabitant as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers. The Government of India have not shown even the decency to publish the report of its own Commission on Fiji.

The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have poured their blood like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt on one else. Nankana Saheb, Guruka-Bagh and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

One hears that repression is crushing the Burmese spirit.

Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer, certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not onlv a detestable crime, but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the

murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it ?

The repression in Bengal is therefore not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other in some province or other, as our normal condition till we come to our own.

Need for Sanction

The Congress, therefore, to be worthy of its trust must devise a sanction to back its demands Before we can forget the sanction, we, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis etc. must unite and so should Swarajists, No-changers, Liberals, Home-Rulers, Muslim Leaguers and others. If we can but speak with a united voice and know our own mind, it would be well. If we can develop the power to keep foreign cloth from our land, it would be better. We are ready then for the sanction.

My Faith

Let me state my faith. As a Congressmen wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-cooperation for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot, will not do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely a policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non cooperation and Civil Disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called Satyagraha. It is my *Kalpadrum* my *Jam-i-Jam* the Universal Provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth; and God is Truth. *Ahisma* or Non-Violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj for me is part of that Truth. This Satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa Kheda or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore. I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to be English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It

has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair.

On the contrary, I believe that India will come to her own in the near future, and that only through Satyagraha. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-cooperation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-cooperation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that Satyagraha never fails and that one perfect Satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect Satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like Swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it.

4

BATTLE FOR LIBRETY*

Friends,

Were I to ransack all the treasuries of human language I fear I should fail to discover words of adequate power or beauty to translate my deep and complex emotion in acknowledging the signal honour you have done me, by entrusting to my unskilled hands the high burden and responsibility of so exalted an office, which for two score years has been ennobled by the brilliant and memorable achievement of my distinguished predecessors both of our own and of alien race. I am fully aware that you have bestowed upon me the richest gift in your possession, not merely as gracious recompense for such trivial service as I may have been privileged to render at home or abroad; but rather in generous tribute to Indian womanhood and as token of your loyal recognition of its legitimate place in the secular spiritual counsels of the nation. In electing me to be the chief among chosen servants, through a period so fraught with grave issues and fateful decisions, vou have not created a novel precedent. You have only reverted to an old tradition and restored to Indian woman the classic position she once held in a happier epoch of our country's story : symbol and guardian alike of the hearth-fires, the altar-fires and the beacon-fires of her land. Poignantly conscious as I am of my own utter unworthiness to interpret so exquisite, so austere an ideal of wisdom, devotion and sacrifice, as embodied through the ages in the radiant heroines of our history and legend, I trust, that to the fulfilment of the lofty task you have allotted me, even I might bring some glowing ember of the immortal faith that

*Presidential address delivered by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu at the Kanpur Congress held on 26-28 December, 1925.

illumined the vigil of Sita in her forest exile, and bore the feet of Savitri undaunted to the very citadels of Death.

The accepted convention of this august assembly imposes upon me, alas, the duty of placing before you a formal document of plans and policies of work for the coming year. I, therefore, contrary to the impulse and custom of a life-time, am vainly groping for appropriate phrases that might serve dimly to foreshadow some of the thoughts that can only find spontaneous expression when I stand in your midst and the inspiration of your living presence shall give to my heart its voice of hope, and to my words their wings of fire.

Before we reach the central purpose of our labours in this northern city, to which we have journeyed from the farthest ends of India, let us offer our mournful homage to the memory of our illustrious dead—to that great patriarch of our national renaissance, Surendranath Banerjee, who for well-nigh half a century assailed the heavens with the thunders of his splendid oratory in indignation at the burning wrongs of his people; to Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, the famous scholar of the Deccan, who with patient and dedicated hands rekindled the lamp of our ancient Sanskrit culture, and lifted it high above the clamour and conflict of political throngs, to Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, kingliest of dreamers, whose whole being was a Vaishnavite rhapsody incomparable passion for the liberty of his Motherland, who died with his hand outstretched in a royal gesture of reconciliation towards a powerful antagonist against whom he had fought so often such reckless and victorious chivalry.

Would that he were with us today to guide us aright in our anxious deliberations and help us to apprehend the true and tragic significance of the stupendous problems that call for immediate settlement and cannot with impunity be deferred to a more convenient season. A singular combination of domestic and international circumstances has conspired to implicate us against our will and almost without our knowledge in a labyrinth of intricate and unparallelled difficulties that threaten

the stability and integrity of our national existence. Our imperative duty, therefore, is to survey with eyes unhooded of their habitual illusion, the sinister and melancholy spectacle of our abject helplessness born of our foolish disunion and nourished by our long dependence upon the caprice or the compassion of Imperial policies.

What means shall we devise, what schemes shall we evolve to deliver ourselves from the manifold dangers that encompass us? How shall we combat the deadly forces of repression that challenge our human rights of liberty, now defeat the further encroachment of ruthless and rapacious Imperialist exploitation that despoils the remnants of our moral and material heritage? How circumvent the insidious and ingenious aggression of other foreign races eager to profit by the conditions of our economic and intellectual servitude? How shall we avert the implacable doom that menaces our unfortunate kindred in the Colonies, how quell the rampant forces of reaction or divert the disaster of our internecine feuds?

The answers that we need are fully enshrined in the magnificent Gospel of sacrifice enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi, in which he vainly strove to teach us the heroic secret of national self-redemption. But we, so long disinherited from the epic faith that sustained our brave forefathers, were too weak and unworthy to respond for more than a brief period to the demands of that noble and exacting creed. Whatever may be the verdict of history, it cannot be gainsaid that the movement of non-violent non-cooperation that swept like a tempest over the country shook the very foundations of our national life, and though today it is quiescent and its echoes are almost still, it has irrevocably changed the aspect of our spiritual landscape.

However remote may be all our programmes for the future from the principles and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, they must inevitably be permeated by the influence of these recent years which have permanently shifted the currents of our political thought and altered the direction of our political destiny.

We need today some transcendent miracle of intrepid and enduring statesmanship to enable us to remobilise, reconcile and discipline our scattered and demoralised energies to a supreme unanimous effort for the final deliverance of India from the last shackles of her political subjection; and to devise a comprehensive scheme that shall act as a natural and indispensable auxiliary of political emancipation and include within the scope of its interest or benediction all the enterprises and endeavours that substantially contribute to the social, economic, industrial and intellectual advancement of India, consistently with the requirements of her own peculiar conditions and in accordance with the finest ideals of modern progress.

To give concrete expression to our decisions in regard to these ancillary activities, the Indian National Congress should create definite departments to be governed by groups of men and women specially qualified by their capacity of enthusiasm to administer to the vital and divergent wants of the people. The main divisions might be few but should include within their sphere of responsibility all cognate matters. To my mind it is of paramount importance to formulate a practical scheme of village reconstruction on the lines of Deshbandhu Das's dream. For this purpose we must try to enlist a large band of missionary patriots of burning zeal who set free from material wants by the pious charity of the house-holders of the country as in ancient times, should carry through the length and breadth of the land the beneficent evangel of self-reliance and self-respect, taking the immemorial twin symbols of the plough and the spinning wheel as the central text of the teaching that shall liberate our unhappy peasantry from the crushing misery and terror of hunger, ignorance and disease.

Closely allied to the task of village reorganisation, is the task of organising the industrial workers in the crowded cities, who are so aften compelled to live under conditions that degrade and brutalise them; and who, dislocated from the steadying influences of the familiar traditions and associations of the rural homes they leave in search for bread, are so hopelessly exposed to the temptations of immorality and vice. It should

be our endeavour to assist in securing for them improved housing conditions, better wages and a cleaner atmosphere, and to establish an equitable and harmonious co-operation between Capital and Labour as a valuable joint asset of national progress.

I am appalled at the criminal apathy of our general attitude towards the urgent problem of Indian education. The surpassing evil of foreign domination has been to enslave our imagination and intellect and alienate us from the glorious tradition of our national learning. We are today no more than the futile puppets of an artificial and imitative system of education which, entirely unsuited to the special trend of our racial genius, has robbed us of our proper mental values and perspectives, and deprived us of all true initiative and originality in seeking authentic modes of self-expression. It is is pre-eminently our duty towards the young generation to so recreate our educational ideals as to combine in felicitous and fruitful alliance all the lovely regenerating wisdom of our Eastern culture with all the highest knowledge of art and science, philosophy and civic organisation evolved by the younger peoples of the West.

In addition, I would insist with all the force at my command on including a complete course of military training as an integral part of national education. Is it not the saddest of all shameful ironies that our children whose favourite lullabies are the battle songs of Kurukshetra and whose little feet march gaily to the stirring music of Rajput ballads, should be condemned to depend for the safety of their homes, the protection of their sanctuaries, the security of their mountain and ocean frontiers, on the fidelity and strength of foreign arms? The savage Massai, the primitive Zulu, the Arab and the Afridi, the Greek and the Bulgar may all carry their tribal weapons and claim their inalienable right to defend the honour of their race, but we whose boast it is that we kindled the flame of the world's civilisation are alone defrauded of our privilege and have become cowards by compulsion, unfit to answer the world's challenge to our manhood, unable to maintain the sanctity of our homes and shrines.

Whatever the experiments recommended by the Commission now sitting to explore the avenues of military advancement for our people, it is incumbent upon the Congress to form forthwith a national militia by voluntary conscription, of which the nucleus might well be the existing volunteer organisations. Further we should also carefully consider the question of nautical as well as naval and serial training to equip the nation for all purposes of defence against invasion or attack.

Let it not be said of us, however, that our selfish absorption in our own domestic affairs has made us oblivious of the distress and difficulty of our kinsmen in foreign lands. Our adventurours compatriots, who have crossed the seas to seek their livelihood in the dominions and colonies have from time to time been subjected to restrictive and repressive legislation. The White Paper still stands as a reproach against our failure to redress the wrongs of the Indian community in Kenya. But in the whole chronicle of civilised legislation there has never been so cruel and relentless an outrage against humanity as is deliberately embodied in the anti-Asiatic Bill, which is calculated to exterminate the Indian community from South Africa.

Shall we not send across the seas a loving and ready response to their heart-rending cry for succour, and, through their ambassadors whom we welcome today, offer to our harassed and afflicted brothers in South Africa the assurance that India stands behind their courageous struggle to vindicate their inherent civic and human rights against the onslaught of such terrific injustice and oppression?

Never before has our duty to our kindred in foreign countries been so vividly brought home to our minds; nor the necessity of establishing a close and living contact with all their changing fortunes. We should not lose a single moment in forming an Overseas Department in the Congress manned by those who can keep themselves vigilantly aware of all the legislations and enactments that adversely or otherwise affect Indian settlers abroad.

Here my heart pleads with me to remember those sorrow-

ful and lonely exiles, pining in strange and far off corners of the earth, consumed with a desperate hunger and nostalgia for a glimpse of the motherland, to which they cannot return because, once they sought to serve her and win her freedom in ways unrecognised by the common law. But many amongst them surely have made fullest atonement for all the fervent folly of their too impatient youth. Surely they, who have been chastened in the searching crucibles of dreadful suffering and privation, have been refashioned to become consecrated vessels of selfless service for the amelioration of the poor, the fallen and the depressed.

I cannot conceive how we have allowed ourselves to be so heavily handicapped by the lack of an efficient publicity which is the first essential of any campaign. We should therefore take immediate steps to form a department for widespread political propaganda and for the education of the masses in all matters pertaining to their civic and social interest, to the wrongs under which they labour, the struggles in which the nation is engaged, the iniquitous and unstable fiscal and financial policies so ruinous to the prosperity of the country. I am confident that we could secure the willing cooperation of those who, otherwise prevented from active participation in public affairs, would gladly place their expert knowledge at our disposal, to advise us on questions connected with the revival of cottage industries, on commerce, railway, shipping, cooperative banking and all other branches of development necessary for our material welfare.

The nationalist press both vernacular and English, should be amongst the accredited channels of our propaganda; above all a reliable foreign news service should be established to transmit to all the chief centres of the world the correct version of Indian affairs, and friendly embassies appointed to foster feelings of goodwill and understanding between India and the people of other lands.

And now I approach with the utmost hesitation and regret, the most baffling and most tragic of all the problems before us.

I, who have dedicated my life to the dream of Hindu-Muslim unity, cannot contemplate without tears of blood the dissensions and divisions between us that rend the very fabric of my hope. I have tried to arrive at a just appreciation of the many unfortunate causes that have brought about so deep a gulf between the two communities, and tended to quicken such a sharp and importunate sense of aloofness on the part of my Muslim brothers, which, to the profound alarm and resentment of the Hindu community, manifests itself in a growing and insistent demand for separate and preferential rights and privileges in academic, official, civic and political circles of life. Though I am convinced that the principle of communal representation, whether through a joint or a separate electorate, frustrates the conception of national solidarity, I am compelled to recognise that situated as we are today, in an atmosphere so tense and dark and bitter with unreasoning communal jealousy, suspicion, fear, distrust and hatred, it is not possible to reach any satisfactory or abiding readjustment without the most earnest and patient collaboration between Hindu and Muslim statesmen of undeniable patriotism, to whom we should entrust the delicate and difficult task of seeking some sovereign remedy for so devastating a disease.

I beseech my Hindu brothers to rise to the height of their traditional tolerance which is the basic glory of our Vedic faith and try to comprehend how intense and far-reaching a reality is the brotherhood of Islam, which constrains seventy millions of Indian Musalmans to share with breathless misery the misfortunes that are so swiftly overtaking the Islamic countries and crushing them under the heel of the military despotism of foreign powers.

In their turn I would implore my Muslim comrades not to permit their preoccupation with the sorrows of Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Arabia to obliterate the consciousness of their supreme duty to India their motherland, who must always have the first claim upon their devotion and allegiance.

If Hindus and Musalmans would both learn to practise the divine qualities of mutual forbearance and accord to one ano-

ther perfect liberty of worship and modes of living, without the tyranny of fanatical interruptions of one another's appointed rituals and sacrifices, if they would but learn to reverence the beauty of each other's creeds and the splendour of each other's civilisations, if the women of the two communities would but join together in the intimate friendship of their common sisterhood, and nurture their children in an atmosphere of mutual sweetness and harmony, how near we should come to the fulfilment of our heart's desire.

We should grossly fail in our duty to our neighbours, were we to omit to try and foster cordial ties of sympathy and trust between ourselves and the princes and the people of the great Indian States, scrupulously refraining from all interference in their internal concerns but always ready to serve in their wider interests.

No can we afford to ignore the claims of the frontier provinces which owing to their peculiar geographical and strategic position on the map, are governed by a form of perpetual martial law. We should render them all the assistance in our power, in their efforts to obtain to normal civic and social amenities which are so abundantly enjoyed by their sister provinces.

These are some of the accessory features of our work. The real function, however, of the Indian National Congress is the speedy attainment of Swaraj.

There is a large and influential section of Congressmen who still cling with touching and jealous loyalty to the orthodox creed of Non-cooperation. Sternly refusing to take cognizance of legislative bodies they devote themselves to the pursuit of Mahatma Gandhi's benevolent mission, propagating the cult of the spinning wheel and ministering to the lowly and pitiful outcastes of our society whom, in our arrogance, we have so long deprived of their elementary human rights.

Today, therefore, the Swaraj Party with its highly disciplined organisation and its striking record of success is the only politi-

cal body within the Congress engaged in actual combat with bureaucratic authority. Is it not in this crucial hour the unmistakable duty of all the other political parties in the country, irrespective of their particular labels and particular beliefs, to return to the Congress which invites them with open doors, and coalesce all their divided energies and talents in devising a common programme of action in pursuance of a common goal?

All of them have openly acknowledged that the reforms of 1919 which were to have created a new era of progress have proved nothing but a mirage and the powers they professed to transfer to the people nothing but a deceptive myth. All of them surely, are tacitly agreed upon some common maximum of the wrongs they are still prepared to endure, some common minimum of the rights they are now determined to enforce. And whatever be my own personal conviction, they at all events are all in favour at least as an initial form of self-government of the ideal of Dominion Status, so elaborately expounded in the Commonwealth of India Bill, and more succinctly and emphatically embodied in the National Demand which has been endorsed by the representatives of all political schools in the Legislative Assembly. Below the limits of that demand the Indian nation cannot descend without irretrievable damage to its dignity and self-respect.

It is now for the Government to make the responsive gesture that shall decide our future attitude. If the response be sincere and magnanimous, with ample guarantees of goodwill and good faith on its part, it will necessitate an immediate revision of our present policy. But if by the end of the Spring Sessions, we receive no answer or an answer that evades the real issues or proves unworthy of our acceptance, the National Congress must clearly issue a mandate to all those who come within its sphere to vacate their seats in the Central and Provincial Legislatures and inaugurate from Kailas to Kanyakumari, from the Indus to the Brahmaputra, an untiring and dynamic campaign to arouse, consolidate, educate and prepare the Indian people

for all the progressive and ultimate stages of our united struggle and teach them that no sacrifice is too heavy, no suffering too great, no martyrdom too terrible, that enables us to redeem our Mother from the unspeakable dishonour of her bondage, and bequeath to our children an imperishable legacy of Peace.

In the battle for liberty, fear is the one unforgivable treachery and despair, the one unforgivable sin.

With palms uplifted in ardent supplication, I pray that, to us, in our coming hour of travail, may be granted in sufficient measure an invincible faith and an inflexible courage, and that He in whose name we begin our labours today will in the hour of our triumph keep us humble and in the beautiful words of our ancient invocation.

Lead us out of the Unreal into the Real.
Out of the Darkness into the Light,
Out of Death into Immortality,

5

A CHARTER OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME*

Friends,

I am profoundly grateful for the signal honour that unredeemed India has conferred on me. I have accepted the responsibilities of this great office made more formidable to me by the luster of great names, at a time, as Mahatma Gandhi put it, "of unexampled difficulty" only in the belief that it was a compliment to South India and that, in the discharge of my task, I shall have your full support and co-operation.

The National Demand and its Sequel

The foremost of our duties for the coming year is to mobilise all our forces on the issue of the National Demand. It was formulated in February, 1924, in the Legislative Assembly by Pandit Motilal Nehru on behalf of the Nationalist Party consisting of the Swarajists and the independents. It asked the Government to take steps to have the Government of India Act revised with a view to establish full Responsible Government in India and for that purpose to summon at an early date representative Round Table Conference to recommend the scheme of a constitution for India with due regard to the protection of the rights and interests of important minorities; and to place the scheme for approval before a newly elected Indian Legislature after dissolving the Central Legislature and finally submit the same to the British Parliament to be embodied in a statute. That resolution was passed by the majority of 76 to 48 against the Government; and though the Swarajya Party began their work in the Assembly with a gesture of honourable cooperation, the

*Presidential address delivered by Srinivas Iyenger at the Gauhati Congress held on 26-28 December, 1926.

Government arrogantly brushed it aside. But in order to side-track the principal issue, they appointed the Reforms Inquiry Committee to investigate the feasibility and desirability of securing remedies for the difficulties and defects connected with the working of the Government of India Act but consistently with the policy, structure and purpose of the Act. The evidence that was given before the Committee by those who worked the reformt devotedly as well as the report of the minority established clearly that the system of Dyarchy, both as a step towards responsible government and otherwise, was an egregious failure. The attempt of the Government of India to induce the Assembly to accept the recommendations contained in the Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee was met by a reiteration of the national demand in the Assembly in September, 1925, in an amplified form. This time also the Assembly by a majority of 72 to 45 passed the resolution, Swarajists and Independents acting together. It was a second time rejected by the Government.

In December, 1925, the Congress held at Kanpur ratified on behaf of the country the terms of the settlement offered by the Independent and Swarajya Parties by the resolution on the national demand. To enforce that demand in case it was rejected and to carry on the fight for Swaraj, the Congress adopted a programme of work both in the country and in the Councils and provided for the education of the electorates in its policy and the capture by Congressmen, under specific pledges, of the elected seats in the several legislatures.

In March, 1926, on the refusal of the Government to accede to the demand, the Swarajya Party walked out of the Assembly and the Provincial Councils in accordance with the Congress mandate. The leader of the Party in the Assembly said on that occasion : "We hope and trust that the nation will give a suitable reply to the truculent rejection of our demands and send us again in larger numbers with a stronger mandate and, God willing, with the sanction for fulfiling its aspirations and enforcing its commands."

The General Elections and their Significance

The results of the campaign thus opened and of the general elections that followed and are just now over, have justified the policy of the Swarajya Party in the Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Councils and have abundantly proved the wisdom of the great experiment inaugurated by the Congress as its Kanpur Session. Throughout the country, thanks to the Congress electoral campaign, there has been a tremendous amount of political education and the vehemence, the extent and the concentrated fire of the opposition, communal or other, have only served to demonstrate the utter soundness of the programme and policy of the Congress, and the strong hold it has over the people.

The provinces of Madras, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, in a striking degree and the other provinces including the Punjab, to a lesser extent, have responded to the Congress mandates and come under the Congress discipline. If in some provinces our success has not been as great as in others, it is due solely to the fact that Congressmen they were divided amongst themselves and was not due to the superiority in the programme or policy of any definite political party. Having regard to the fact that it is the first time that Congress has run the elections on an all India scale and that there were serious differences amongst Congress leaders and workers; the successes achieved under the Kanpur mandate all over India are, both in quantity and in quality, most remarkable. Though they have not been a surprise of most of us, they have come as a shock to the bureauracy and its allies in every province. Nor can we forget that most of those who succeeded against the Congress candidates, though they had not subscribed to the Congress pledges, succeeded still as Congressmen. On the whole he who runs may read the lesson of the elections that the centre of political gravity has dicisively and definitely shifted from the bureaucracy and its Indian supporters to the National Congress.

The real meaning of our suceess at the general elections of 1926, the success of those that obeyed the Kanpur mandate, cannot

be easily missed. It constitutes an unmistakable endorsement of the national demand of the policy of walk-out that marked its rejection by the Government. It also signalises the enthronement of a sound and robust nationalism in place of communalism as a dominant political factor. In Madras' Brahmin-non-Brahmin differences have ceased to be the great prop of the foreign bureaucracy that they have been till now. And it is a matter for gratification that in Tamil Nadu and in Bihar, Muslims have joined the Congress Party and been successful in the elections. Above all, the country has given its unequivocal verdict against the system of Dyarchy and the rest of the political apparatus established by the Reform Act. For, we must remember that Congress members form the largest single party in almost every legislative council, though in some provinces they are much more numerous than in others. And they went to the polls on a clear pledge of non-acceptance of the office of Minister till a satisfactory response was made by the Government to the national demand. Nor can we overlook that the elections with all the difficulties that we had to face have been a severe test of our capacity for Swaraj, and have given us patience, skill, a quite confidence, a nation-wide organisation, party loyalty and a thoroughly democratic outlook.

We are Asked to Work Dyarchy

We have by now largely cleared the decks for action and must therefore concentrate our attention next on enforcing compliance with the national demand. We shall for the present keep the door open for a just and honourable settlement. But we must not deceive ourselves into the belief that the Governments in England and in India are now willing to concede our demand or even to open negotiations with us for the purpose. They will be, as they have always been, prodigal of words that mean nothing and will deploy against us all the arts of a trained and evasive diplomacy They only answer, we have so far had from Government, in every variety of accent and phrase, is, that we should "lay aside for the time being our demand for Swaraj and should soberly and whole-heartedly work the present cons-

titution." It is conveniently ignored that the new constitution was worked by various groups of moderate or progressive politicians "soberly and whole-heartedly" during the period of the first Councils. The boycott of the Councils by the Congress, far from obstructing the path of the Reform Act enabled men who had confidence in the Government and in whom the Government had confidence to cooperate unreservedly and to work the Act. Then again, in the period of the second councils after the Act, in many provinces and notably in Madras and Bombay groups of politicians worked the constitution exactly in the way in which they were required to do. How can it be said that the constitution has not been given a fair chance or has not been worked for 6 years by Indians pledged to cooperate "soberly and whole-heartedly" with the Government ? Even the opposition by the Swarajists, during the term of the second councils was in strictness only a parliamentary opposition, except in Bengal and the Central Provinces. Whether the constitution was worked by Congressmen or by moderate groups, should make no difference to the Government. What the Government therefore requires really of us is that the Congress should give up its demand for Swaraj and merge itself in the bureaucracy.

Shall we still think it wise to harbour the wish, that is father to the thought, or to discover proofs of a changed heart in ingenious hints dropped by press correspondents or in the impressions of those that are in touch with high officials or with past or present members of Parliament who are more able to advise us than to bring round British opinion and parties to our view ? The least therefore that we must insist upon is a businesslike statement in public, precise and concrete, and satisfactory in content and tone, by the Government in India or in England. Meanwhile, we must follow up the victories we have gained by consolidating all our forces and by steadily increasing the pressure of the councils and of the country upon the Government. We must pool all our resources together and make a firm stand against a non-co-operative bureaucracy and wrest Swaraj from their unwilling hands. I trust the lapse of 6 years has not made us either forget the wholly illusory character of

the Reforms or develop a new tenderness towards them. Our experience has, if anything, abundantly shown that the reforms have not given the people's representative any real power and can lead neither to self-government nor to good government. A brief and dispassionate examination of the salient features of the Reform Act should convince us that we should be stultifying ourselves if we developed a new faith in it.

Is Dyarchy Workable

That Dyarchy is neither a helpful stage in the progressive realisation of Responsible Government, nor serves as apt machinery for grinding down good Government, has been the unanimous verdict of experience and is now practically admitted on all hands. Lord Birkenhead himself has referred to it more than once in apologetic terms though he insists upon our working it. Its true purpose is not merely to provide for the administration of certain subjects by the Governor and his Executive Council, but to attenuate the power of the Ministers and the control of the Legislature over the transferred subjects. Under this grotesque system, the Ministers are always under official tutelage and domination so that they cannot breathe the oxygen of freedom. The joint deliberation between Ministers and Members of Council for which Lord Willingdon took credit proved to be in the interests of the reserved half. Even without it, most matters relating to transferred subjects require to be considered by those in charge of the reserved departments and to that extent are shaped by the opinion of that half of the Government. This was fully established by the evidence before the Reforms Inquiry Committee. The fact that members of the Civil Service are themselves Members of Government makes the Ministers helpless in their relation to the members of the Civil Service.

Again, the rules relating to financial restrictions and the control exercised by the Finance Member as one in charge of a reserved subject over important aspects of transferred subjects, make the power of the Ministers as unreal as that of puppets. Lastly, the division of subjects between the reserved and the transferred halves is such that the pith and marrow of a government are with the former. As regards the conflicts between the two halves

mode of naming the established leaders of the majority in the Council but is a substantial power of patronage by which nobody or anybody can be made a *benami* leader to carry out the Governor's policy.

3. We all know that a Legislative Council has no control over the items of expenditure known as non-votable under each transferred head including the salaries and allowances and all other payments of officials belonging to superior services in that department. These non-votable items amount to a high percentage of the expenditure relating to each transferred subject.

4. The Ministers have little or no control over the members of the civil or other public services serving in departments dealing with transferred subjects, and the Governor has and exercises the power of making all apointments to posts in transferred departments. The statutory independence of the Indian Civil Service is the most outstanding feature of the Reform Act. All the parliamentary apparatus of a responsible government will prove to be a costly and pompous futility unless the completest control over the Indian Civil and other services is unreservedly secured to Ministers fully responsible to a wholly elected legislature.

5. The Governor is empowered to over-ride the Minister's decisions on questions relating to a transferred subject and direct him to act otherwise

6. The Governor has an emergency power the emergeney to be determined by himself to authorise expenditure notwithstanding a vote of the Legislative Council in respect of transferred subjects.

7. The Governor has power to stop legislation in respect of transferred subjects notwithstanding the opinion of Legislative Council.

8. He can return a Bill relating to a transferred subject to the Council for reconsideration with his recommendations with his recommendations which are in effect obligatory. What

this power means was forcibly illustrated by Lord Willingdon in Madras in connection with the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill.

9. When a Governor cannot through his Ministry manage a Council to his satisfaction, he can himself administer the transferred subjects as happened in the Central Provinces.

10. A Minster can hold office during the Governor's pleasure which does not mean the formal expression of the Council's pleasure but his own independent pleasure against the opinion of the Council, as was vividly demonstrated by Lord Lytton in Bengal.

11. The Governor is entitled to disallow any motion for the adjournment of the business of the Council to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance even when it relates to a transferred subject.

12. The allocation of the revenues for the administration of transferred subjects depend primarily on the will of the reserved half and of the Governor and not on the decisions of the Legislative Council.

I have restated the position under the Act only to make it clear that even if Dyarchy goes, a Legislative Council will have control over the transferred subjects only if and when the Governor allows and not otherwise.

The Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee concedes that the Dyarchy which was introduced is "clearly a complex confused system having no logical basis, rooted in compromise and defensible only as a transitional expedient." It is not possible to imagine to what it is a transition or how it is defensible except as an expedient for putting off the grant of Swaraj or of substantial reforms leading to Swaraj. The majority of the Committee add : "While the period during which the present constitution has been in force has been too short to enable a well-founded opinion as to its success to be formed, the evidence before us is far from convincing that it has failed."

This oracular judgment is much too ingenuous to deceive any one and is a sufficient condemnation of the system of hybrid executive, councils partly elected and partly nominated and all the other devices of the sham scheme of reforms which was admitted by its authors themselves to be charged with potentialities of friction The Minority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee concludes that "the present system has failed and is incapable of yielding better results in future."

Central Government

Nor can it be pretended that the Central Government is at all responsible to the Indian Legislature.

1. The Legislature has no power of the purse. Nearly three-fourths of the expenditure of the Government of India excluding that on Railways, is withdrawn from the vote of the Legislative Assembly and as to the remaining fourth, the Government is empowered to restore any demand which has been refused or reduced by it. The Governor-General has also an emergency power to authorise at his discretion any expenditure, he being the sole judge of the emergency.

2. The Governor-General may direct the stay of any bill, clause or amendment.

3. In addition to the power to make temporary ordinances, the Governor-General is given what he had not before the Reforms Act, the autocratic power of certifying any bill and signing it as a permanent law on his sole and absolute authority notwithstanding the refusal of the Legislature.

4 The Assembly is neither wholly nor in reality a representative and democratic chamber. Between a third and a fourth of its strength consists of nominated members and a three-fourths majority of elected members is required to defeat the Government and to enforce the popular will. For the Government's 40 votes are bound to neutralise at least an equal number of elected votes. Further, from amongst the elected strength must be deducted the seats provided for special constituencies

which, in the Assembly as in Provincial Councils, are amongst the fortification of the bureaucracy.

5. There is for the Government the additional safeguard provided by the second chamber. And the Council of State is so planned and constructed as to checkmate the Assembly and to form an impregnable citadel for the Government. It has, time and again, proved itself to be reactionary and has turned down the decisions of the Assembly on most vital questions. For instance, it agreed to the enhancement of the Salt Tax and to the Finance Bill and supported the certificate of the Viceroy against the decision of the Assembly. It rejected the Bill passed by the latter for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. It passed the Bill relating to the Bengal interness, that was rejected by the other chamber and the resolution relating to the Lee Commission recommendations against its decision and it approved of the recommendations of the Majority Report of the Reforms Inquiry Committee against the opinion of the Assembly.

It is then abundantly clear that the centre of gravity both in Central Government and in the provinces, alike in transferred and in reserved departments, when analysed closely, is, both in fact in constitutional theory in the Executive Government, in other words, in the bureaucracy It would, therefore be a tragedy if we still sought to discover, in all this statutory hypocrisy. the germs of self-government.

Deshbandhu's Offer

While our national demand remains rejected, there has been no response to the gesture of peace that was made by the heroic figure of Deshbandu Das. No fairer offer could have been made than was made by him at Faridpur in his great and moving appeal for reconciliation. As he said : "the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the Commonwealth in the near future and in the meantime till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation of such Swaraj should be laid at once.

Further, the Government should divest itself of its wide discretionary powers of constiaint and follow it up by a general amnesty for ali political prisoners.'' The long history of repression that has darkened our struggle for freedom proves that the curve of repression and the curve of reforms go inter-twined ; of repression gilded with reforms, of reforms withered by repression. The case of the Bengal internees as well as of the Sikh patriots is about the most flagrant violation of elementry justice we have had ; and the harrowing story of the Bengal Ordinance and other internees as well as the earlier story of the Punjab agony and abasement shows that we are asked always to move in a vicious circle with shame and humiliation as our badge, and not Swaraj as our birth-right. No settlement with the Government can be held to be just or honourable that does not involve a complete reversal of all repressive measures and a clear guarantee against their future repetition.

Further, while the plea was set up that the Government of India Act could not be revised before the appointed term in the direction of more substantial concessions, no difficulty was found by the Government in amending the Act so as to give effect to the Lee Commission recommendations involving an annual increase of 1.25 crores of rupees in the emoluments of superior services.

India's Status

Again. while India is being denied Swaraj, the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Empire Prime Ministers has restated the position of the Dominions as "autonomous communities within the British Empire equal in status and in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs though united by common allegiance to the Crown are freely associated as members of the Britith Commonwealth of Nations". That committee adds, and rightly, that every Dominion now and always must remain the sole judge of the nature and extent of its cooperation. India is, of course, excluded from this priviledged communion. She is not to be a free country, equal in status to the Dominions, but is to bear the

galling burden of an Empire ; and the nature and extent of her cooperation are to be determined for her by others. The time has, I think, come when we must make it clear to others and to ourselves that if England wants India was remain within the British Empire it can be only on the terms just stated; and that otherwise none can or should set any limits to her freedom.

If we confine ourselves to the abolition of Dyarchy, are we certain that the residuary powers of the Governor will be surrendered ? What again is the use of responsible Provincial Government without a responsible Central Government ? The comedy will be enacted differently but its spirit and purpose will be there if the Central Government is not a fully responsible government. Supposing again, both the Central and the Provincial Governments and made responsible governments and we are still not to touch the Civil Service, the position will be no better. The Indian agents of the foreign bureaucracy will be more numerous and there will be more competition for Ministerships but the masters will be the same. We cannot therefore compromise on the question of appointment and control of the services or provide for them a dual control. Any scheme of self-Government will be nothing but an empty form if the control over the army and navy and the control over the political relations with Indian States, as distinguished from foreign relations with other countries, are not given to our Swaraj Government. Any such reservation will deprive the Indian Swaraj Government of financial, administrative and political control over the Indian people including Indian Princes. Otherwise, self-governing India be menaced by an army under foreign control and the Indian States will be perpetual thorns in its side, if nothing worse. These departments are now included in the definition of Dominion Status and form items 1 to 4 in the scheduled of central subjects administered by the Government of India and are indispensable for the maintenance of a real Swaraj Government.

Army and Navy

The naive concession made by some of our friends as to our

incapacity to administer the army and the navy contradicts our demand for swaraj and supports the argument of the advocates of the alien rule that tell us, "You cannot have an army and navy to defend you : how then can you have Swaraj ? It is but an illustration of our diffident mentality to assume that we cannot maintain or control an army or navy. There is absolutely no truth in it. There is a splendid Indian army which has distinguished itself in a hundred fields in all parts of the world. That the Mohammedans and Maharattas formed and led armies in other days according to the then standards of equipment and efficiency proves that there is no inherent deficiency in the Indian people in that respect. If one thing more than another is illustrated by any true history of India, it is that our people had plenty of martial spirit. As to the navy, the ancient Indian people were an adventurous and sea-faring race and had far-flung colonies. But, it is not the historical or racial argument that calls for enlargement, for free India can buy and man a fleet and maintain an army on the most modern lines. It is in ultimate analysis nothing but a question of finance and the training of men. Japan and China and all the lesser states of the world that enjoy self-government have found these things and there is no reason why we cannot find them. I would, therefore, urge upon you that we should clearly think out what Swaraj means and should not abate an iota in our demand for full self-government.

In the meantime, our paramount duty is, as I as have already urged, without waiting any longer for a response that does not come, to organise more completely than we have hitherto attempted, the will of the nation on our demand for Swaraj.

To that end, the twin principles of self-reliance in all nation-building work and of resistance to every anti-national activity must inspire all our efforts, as they certainly inspired the non-cooperation phase of the struggle. In that view and in view of our present limitations, and for the immediate present, the programme of work both in the councils and in the country, as laid down by the Congress at Kanpur cannot, I think, in its general outline, be easily bettered.

And first as to work in the Councils, the general policy of Congressmen in the Assembly and the various Councils should be one of the resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj; and in particular, Congressmen in the legislature should :

(a) refuse to accept offices as the gift of the Government until in the opinion of the Congress a satisfactory response is made by the Government to the national demand ;

(b) refuse supplies and throw out budgets (unless otherwise directed by the All-India Working Committee) until such response is made by the Government ;

(c) throw out all proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposes to consolidate its powers ;

(d) move resolutions and introduce and support measures and bills which are necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interest of the country ;

(e) take steps to improve the condition of agricultural tenants by introducing and supporting measures to secure fixity of tenure and other advantages with due regard to the rights of the *Zamindars* ; and

(f) generally project the rights of labour, agricultural and industrial and tenants, capitalists and workmen.

This was framed in the light of experience so as to be acceptable to as large a number as possible of workers in the political field and it represents the minimum amount of resistance that is required for the success of our movement.

The Question of Office

Controversy has raged round the question of non-accep-

tance of office ; but it should be easy to come to a decision upon it, if we kept in view the spirit and objective of our fight against the bureaucracy. In no province is the Congress party in the Council in an obsolute majority so as to be able to take office and dictate terms to the head of the Government and the reserved half. To form a ministry, it will have to coalesce with other groups and to lower its flag and to lose its distinctive character. And any such Ministry if formed can hold office only on sufferance and with the support of the Government and its nominated and official group of votes. On the one hand, it will be indistinguishable in achievement of rather the lack of it, from a Ministry formed by any non-Congress group of members, if, on the other hand, it attempts to maintain its spirit and carry out its purpose it must either resign instantly or acquiesce ignominiously in its failure. Again, a strong Minister can only attempt to improve some of the details of administration but can neither help to change the system of Government nor can effect even material improvements in administration. By improving a detail here and a detail there of administration, he would rather help to perpetuate the existing system of Government by casting his reflecting benevolence on the bureaucracy. In reality, no one who has closely followed the achievements of Ministers in the several provinces can seriously believe that any Ministry can, without a proper system of self-government, get good government for the country.

We should also clearly realise that the power of an opposition, though indirect, is very real and much more effective than the power of Ministers and that if we are disciplined and energetic and in sufficient numbers in any Council we can carry out our policy and programme more easily than the Ministers.

The refusal to accept office till a satisfactory response is made, constitutes an amount of political pressure that is necessary and sufficient to induce the Government to come to a settlement. By accepting office, the Congress is bound to become an unconsciouslly of the bureaucracy. And, if the most advanced party in the country takes office, where will be the determined and disciplined opposition in each council to fight

against Dyarchy or for Swaraj ? Neither the Ministers nor their party can openly speak and vote against the administration of reserved subjects. Again, neither the refusal of the Government to release political prisoners and interness nor the rejection of our reasonable demand nor that of our offer of honourable cooperation can be forgotten when we are asked to take office, not as part of a settlement, but as a token of our unconditional surrender. Our self-respect prohibits us from retracting our steps when, instead of defeat, victory beckons us to march ahead.

It is said that if we cannot organise forthwith civil disobedience there is no other honest alternative than to own ourselves beaten and accept office. Neither horn of the dilemma exists save in one's imagination. The policy we are pursuing is thoroughly logical and practical and, if persisted in for a while longer will be crowned with success. After the severest denunciations of the Reform Act on a thousand platforms and the most cogent demonstration of the futility of taking office, it were an anti-climax to think of Ministers now. I am certain that the Government wants Congressmen to become Ministers only on the terms of "sober and whole-hearted cooperation" with the reserved half and the bureaucracy. I am sure, we are all convinced that without a fair measure of self-denial we shall never be able to achieve anything and that a policy of continuous opposition and resistance to the bureaucracy is required to give tone to our organization and life and vigour to our movement. Lastly, let us not forget that the policy of non-acceptance of office is neither unconditional nor for all time. On the other hand, its relaxation or modification depends upon the attitude of the Government and its willingness to agree to conditions more or less similar to those that were adumbrated by Desabandhu Das at Faridpur.

Objection is raised to the continuance of our present policy in the Councils on the ground that it has been tried for the post three years and that we are not yet in sight of the realisation of our hopes. The charge of barrenness is falsfied by the party's splendid record of achievement in the last Assembly and

in the Councils, and by the results of the general elections as a whole. Shall we forget that it was to create an atmosphere of resistance both in the Councils and in the country that we entered the former and that we succeeded in making their atmosphere invigorating and markedly different from what it was before ? We have not yet fully acquired the habit of resistance. And the power of resistance must be indefinitely increased till it fulfils itself. Again, this time, the work in the country must be our first care; it will then easily gather such volume and intensity as to sweep everything before it.

The Kanpur session of the Congress marked a turning point in the history of the Congress and of the country. By making the programme and policy of the Swarajya Party its own and by absorbing that party, the Congress gave a new orientation to our political activities. It resolved upon the nationalisation of their legislatures established by Government by bringing them under its own control. This change of attitude on the part of the Congress towards legislature has been fiercely attacked from more than one quarter. It has been denounced as constitutional heresy to claim for the Congress a control over the Legislatures. The justification of the claim is, however, obvious Experience during the period of the non-co-operation movement had shown that the Councils functioned as anti-national instructions and thwarted the attempts of the Congress to obtain Swaraj. It was, therefore, necessary to ensure that the political institution established by the nation and the political institutions established by the government should function as a single organ and speak with one voice.

National Government

Our foremost duty is to keep constantly before our eyes the vision of Swaraj, what it is, what it requires of us, and what it will not permit us. It means nothing less than that the Congress should have the fullest control over the people and should have steadily increasing number of workers knit together in bonds of unshakeable loyalty and perfect understanding.

It is only in proportion as the control of the Congress over the people increases in area and in intensity, we can obtain or establish Swaraj. We must make the Congress the centre of all our activities and build up Swaraj in and through it. It is, therefore, right and wise for the Congress to organise thoroughly all the electorates whether for the Legislature or local bodies and to bring them under its discipline and control. The millions that have the franchise and the millions that have not, have to be habituated to accept voluntarily and cheerfully, the mandates of the Congress as the mandates of a national government. While the aim of the non-cooperation movement was to form the national administration leaving the political and administrative bodies under the influence, discipline and control of Government, what we should now do is to bring under Congress control not only the people who are more or less indifferent to the political and administrative institutions of Government but also those who seek to utilise them directly or indirectly. At the recent elections, have been demonstrated the love of the people for the Congress and their willingness to come under the Congress banner. It is of the very greatest importance that the electorates for the legislatures and local bodies should be so thoroughly educated and nationalized that they and the Congress may become identical in spirit, purpose and action, if not in numbers. The Congress, and not the Government, must issue mandates to the Legislative Councils, to the local bodies and to the village administrations. Under this scheme, both the work in the country and in the Councils can be so closely interrelated as to develop the maximum amount of political pressure against the Government. When the electorates, the legislatures and the Congress learn to act as a single organisation sanctions for the enforcement of national rights and demands will, of themselves, spring into existence.

Again, we have to organise the country in respect of the many grievances of the people. They are not yet fully alive either to their rights or to their wrongs. The study and investigation of grievances must form an essential part of Congress work The Congress members of all the legislatures should meet

as a separate national legislature and frame model laws for adoption by the people. The remedying of grievances must be upon the basis of self-reliance and resistance and not on the basis of cooperation with the Government. The people must be taught to assert their rights and to develop their powers of self-reliance and resistance. The issues of prohibition, of taxation of land and above all of unemployment will give us sufficient momentum and take us a long way forward.

If incessant propaganda is carried on in town and in village, if the Congressmen inside and outside the Councils interest themselves, each group in the work of the other, and if people are organised in respect of grievances upon which they feel most strongly, the end will soon be in sight.

We must establish village *Sabhas* that shall, under Congress mandate, administer village affairs and be the units of a permanent Swaraj. The great practical difficulties that are in the way must not depress us but should only serve as a powerful stimulus to exertion. Mastery, as has rightly been said, is acquired by resolved limitation; and the acid test of Indian leadership, of resolute patriotism and of constructive ability consists in the determination and contentment of men to organise and lead villages for the cause of Swaraj. The secret of success in the work of village reconstruction mainly lies in the discovery of apt rural leadership.

In this way, the Congress will ere long become the national government.

Capture of Local Bodies

The work that I think must next be undertaken is the capture of local bodies in every province. Both in connection with the constructive programme and on its own merits I would urge upon you the need for such action. If Congressmen pledged to carry out the constructive programme and to follow the advice of local Congress committees make it a point to capture as many seats as possible in the municipalities and local boards, the national movement will gain tremendously in strength. You can,

in the first place, powerfully help the anti-drink campaign and place in on a practical basis; you can also nationalise education in municipal and board schools and spread the cult of Khaddar amongst teachers and boys and amongst municipal voters and employees. You will be able to devise ways and means to relieve unemployment to an appreciable extent. And those in service of local bodies will become nationalised if their administration is undertaken by Congressmen. You will benefit the people in other practical ways, besides giving them the advantages which a municipality or board is intended to give but so seldom gives. In the second place, Congressmen will acquire local leadership and establish control for the Congress over the people of the locality. At present, the control is either exclusively with persons who are hostile or indifferent to the national movement or is divided between them and us. The present influence of the bureaucracy and its ministerial or other allies over local bodies must be replaced by ours and the hold of the Congress over the people greatly strengthened. In the third place, you will be able to communicate to others that burning love of country that is in you. Fourthly, it will enable all sections of Congressmen to come together and will give us additional organisations from which and by which the fight for Swaraj can be carried on. Lastly, village reconstruction and village government can with the resources of the local bodies be more easily achieved than if we have to set about that work without such aid. We have already succeeded to some extent in the direction of nationalizing local bodies and have demonstrated its feasibility. Neither the occasional failure of the experiment nor academical arguments founded on obsolete theories, nor all the difficulties incidental to elections and the formation and maintenance of parties should deter us from persevering in it. The local bodies must be reformed by the abolition of nominated seats and must become parts of our great national organisation.

Constructive Programme

No less important than the programme of work in the Councils and in the local bodies is the constructive programme of

the Congress. Neither our political preoccupations, nor any comparative table of values which one may frame for one's self should make us forget that khaddar, prohibition and removal of untouchability as well as the other items of work are vital aspects of our national movement.

Khaddar

Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi's inspiration and iron will, the restoration of the spinning wheel to its ancient primacy has made the boycott of foreign cloth real to an appreciable extent and has powerfully stimulated Swadeshi spirit and enterprise in all forms and directions. It has by its persuasiveness affected to a visible extent the national psychology, and has lent a new dignity to our manhood and womanhood. For, it has given us a feeling of self-respect and has raised the Indian name in the estimation of the Western and Eastern world.

From bitter hostility and contempt it has journeyed through all the stages of misunderstanding and has at last found a home in our hearts. It has demonstrated our constructive ability and is increasingly providing relief for unemployment while the State is doing nothing to mitigate it. Above all, work in this direction means love and love means influence. And the political pressure exerted by a boycott of foreign cloth is there all the time. The transfer of jurisdiction over khadi production from the Congress to an expert organisation has, I think, ensured for it a permanent and conspicuous place in our national life unaffected by the controversies and fluctuations of politics. I trust the All-India Spinners' Association will become a nationwide labour organisation which, if it cannot be identical with Swaraj, will go some way towards it. For, its potentialities are considerable; it can greatly help in the work of village reconstruction and in the establishment of village government. During 1925-26, Khadi production was 19 lakhs and this year it is expected that there will be an increase of 25 per cent. The increase in output has been accompanied by a steady improvement in quality and in patterns and Khadi has become distinctly cheaper. Nevertheless, the demand for Khadi is not as rapid and

universal as one would wish. It is, therefore, our paramount duty to see that continuous political and patriotic backing is given to Khadi and to the boycott of foreign cloth and that the new spheres of influence which our national organisation has won through the message of Khaddar are not lost to us by our indifference to it. And let us remember that of the two greatest achievements of Mahatma Gandhi, non-cooperative and Khaddar, though it is difficult to decide which is the greater, Khaddar is at once the radiant symbol of our self-reliance and of our power of resistance.

Prohibition

We have not, I am afraid, latterly paid much attention to the question of total prohibition. Our movement will gain in moral grandeur if we successfully organise the 'will of the nation in that behalf. The measures they were adopted during the active period of non-cooperation were no doubt marked by temporary exaltation and magnificently illustrated our spirit of sacrifice. They have, however, led to no permanent changes in the landscape. No minister has during the past six years been found, and I doubt whether a minister will now be found, to be courageous enough to bring in a bill for total prohibition and to resign his office on its rejection or disallowance. Anyhow, while the fight for Swaraj is carried on in the legislatures and outside, we must devise effective ways of removing the drink evil which is among the greatest causes of poverty in many provinces.

In my province, where the Congress Party in the Council is pledged to make total prohibition a major issue, next only to Swaraj, the drink revenue amounts to nearly 6 crores of rupees out of a total provincial revenue of 16 crores. At least twice the amount of revenue derived by the Government in each province under Excise will represent the minimum loss to the people. The loss of revenue to the State due to a policy of total prohibition is more apparent than real; for there is bound to be more than corresponding increase in national wealth. It can, however, if necessary be made good in other ways and

should not make us hesitate to take decisive measures. I do feel that on this point the national conscience is not yet sufficiently roused. And yet both Islam and Hinduism can easily supply tremendous driving power if we will but put our hands to it.

Untouchability

The removal of untouchability was long confined to the platform of social religious reform and did not then make rapid progress. By making it one of the item of the constructive programme of the Congress, we have under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, almost in the twinkling of an eye materially changed the attitude towards it alike of the educated classes and of the masses. The final solution of the question, however, depends in great part upon the improvements of the economic conditions of the vast bulk of the untouchables. And the time has, I think, come when in order to ensure its speedy accomplishment, increasing concentration on it is required. As in the case of Khadi, an ad-hoc organisation consisting of enthusiasts and religious and social reformers will, if properly led, be able to complete the work so splendidly begun by the Congress. Neither foreign nor domestic critics are, however, right when they assert that untouchability is a formidable obstacle to Swaraj, or that its removal will automatically bring about Swaraj. We cannot wait for Swaraj till it is removed any more than we can wait till caste is abolished. There is the capital instance of the United States of America achieving freedom long before the abolition of a very real and widespread slavery.

But we must all agree that we must make an end of untouchability, apart from any question of Swaraj and whether we ever win Swaraj or not. While I would deprecate the iterated rhetorical stress on untouchability as a serious impediment to Swaraj and the consequent admission in favour of foreign domination, the higher philosophy of Hinduism as well as the history of religious dissidence in our country emboldens me to claim that the rule against untouchability has neither part nor lot with the indestructible soul of Hinduism.

Judged by any test, humanitarian, rational or spirtual, patriotic or democratic, we cannot with decency uphold in Hinduism the dogma of an immutable untouchability. It clouds our vision, limits our experience, hardness our heart, narrows our sphere of responsibility and prevents our ideals of justice, love and sincerity from being perfect The feeling that a particular caste or tribe or sect as such is by divine ordinance invested either with a mystic superiority or spiritual guardianship over others or has been condemned by God to bear the visible symbols of a hopeless degradation is destructive of the divinity in man, which is the central doctrine of Hinduism. It is not good for any one, neither for the guardian nor for the ward. As an *Ahaval* of Kapilar, current in my province, puts it "who can see any unlikeness of form between men such as there is between bull and buffalo ? Vasishta born of lowly mistress to Brahma like red water-lily springing up in mire; Sakti born of Chandala woman to Vasishta ; Parasara born to Sakti of Pulaiya woman: Vyasa born of fisher-girl to Parasara; all these by study of the Vedas rose to high estate and are famous as holy men". And if we are still in doubt, it Is dissipated when we listen to Vemana's disconcerting query : "why should we constantly revile the Pariah ? Are not his flesh and blood the same as our own ? And of what caste is he who pervades the Pariah?"

We must, therefore, realise tha' untouchability is but the offspring of man-made custom and has no divine sanction behind it. On the other hand, from the point of view of Hinduism, it prevents it from spreading far and wide and sending its roots deeper and robs it of the transforming influence of missionary fervour.

Tue Congress Party in the Legislative Councils will, I have no doubt, attend to these and to the other items of constructive work to the extent to which they can be furthered in and though the legislatures. I trust it will. in particular, tone up the educational institutions belonging to or aided by the Government and secure the passage of enactments, including,

in courses of compulsory studies, such subjects as will inculcate in boys and girls a consuming patriotism, courage and a wide national outlook.

Labour and Unemyloyment

The organisation of labour has been included by the Congress at Kanpur in its constructive programme. We must give it a front place in our work for the coming year. The welfare of labour, its housing, its provident funds and industrial insurance and all the other things required for improvement in the treatment and conditions of labour are of of great national importance. They constitute a reserved subject though they concern us more than the bureaucracy. Labour legislation in India whether it concerns registration or trade unions or other matters is by no means satisfactory. Labour is not represented by its own men in the existing legislative bodies as the present electorates are two unmanageable and expensive. And nomination is a wholly inadmissible method of securing representation either of labour or of the depressed classes or of any class of the population.

The Congress must therefore increasingly promote the welfare of labour and the Congress party in each legislature should represent its interests and pay special attention to its requirements. Fortunately labour in India is becoming more and more insistent on its rights and is slowly organising itself. There is perfect identity of feeling and interest between the national movement and labour. None need fear that in India the legitimate interests of labour will be sacrificed to capitalist interests; or that the Congress can neither reconcile them nor be just to both.

Next to Swaraj, the greatest of India's needs is the relief of poverty and unemployment. Owing to a variety of causes it has assumed clossal dimensions. The average income of an Indian is hardly Rs. 68 per annum. We are face to face with unspeakable squalor and misery and starvation. The first duty of a Government is to take adequate measures for their removal; but under the present system of Government the problem is

wholly ignored. Otherwise, will the present Government, for instance, establish the great industry of shipbuilding on a large scale or start a line of state-owned steam-ships that will earn freight for India and give employment, as Indian Railways do, to tens of thousands of Indians ? Assuredly not. We want Swaraj for the purpose of discharging what according to our traditions and culture is our paramount duty. For, Swaraj has to be won before we can establish industries on a large scale and adequately deal with the problem of poverty and unemployment. In the meantime the Congress party in the several legislatures should make every attempt to get laws passed compelling the Government to relieve unemployment by the establishment of State industries, by opening up of new tracts for cultivation and in other ways. It should also educate the country and link unemployment to the Swaraj movement in such a way as to produce an increasing amount of pressure on the Government.

Government's Currency Policy

A grievance of considerable magnitude has recently arisen in connection with the currency and exchange policy of the Government. The recommendations of the Currency Commission adopted by the Government do not establish the effective gold standard with gold currency which India needs for her prosperity but are injurious to Indian interests. These and the resolve of the Government to fix the exchange at 18d, its continued deflation of the currency and its sales of Reverse Council Bills contrary to the clear assurance given by the Finance Member that the Assembly would first be consulted, have exasperated Indian public opinion. They are bound to result in gross injustice to our industries, to our agricultural population and to our exporters. A little reflection will make us agree that the lower price of imports is no compensation especially when we remember the expenditure on imported goods by the vast bulk of the consumers is but a small percentage of their total expenditure.

The loss inflicted upon India is very substantial, whether we have regard to the drop of 12.5% in the real value of agricul-

tural produce or of exports or have regard to the competition between products of Indian and foreign industries or to consequential increase in agricultural indebtedness. Nor will additional taxation be, as contended, necessary if the exchange is at 16d. The question should not be regarded as a recondite question for economic Pandits or as if its eventual adjustment does not mean serious loss at present. The currency policy of the Government has a far-reaching importance; it not only affects certain key interests but the general welfare of the country. To say that sections of Indian capitalists want to exploit us is but an attempt to prejudice us which must be resisted. In our fear lest our own capitalists use us, let us not allow overselves to be exploited by foreign capitalists in the interests of England and to the general detriment of India.

I am confident that we shall be able to hold the scales even not only as between rival communities but as between rival interests in India. I cordially welcome the formation of the Indian Currency League and trust that it will adequately educate public opinion on the question of the ratio of the gold standard, gold currency and other cognate questions. But I am certain the League will be able to achieve nothing, either by debate and vote in the Assembly or by protest outside. unless it comes into line with the Congress and unless its mem-members harness themselves to the dynamic politics of the Congress.

Indian States

Indian States, in the opinion of some friends, present a difficult and delicate question in connection with our demand for Swaraj. The difficulty only exists so long as we do not go into it and the delicacy arises because we have one view for British India and another for Indian States. I share, to the full, the sympathy of all those who think that Indian States are a kind of very imperfect Swaraj. They remind us of high estate from which we have fallen and our national instinct, sound in the main prompts us to preserve these relics of an ancient dignity. But the reconciliation between sentiment and the im-

perious necessity for Swaraj is by no means difficult. The rulers of Indian States ought, in their own interest and in the interests of their subjects, to content themselves with the position of hereditary governors or administrators of their territories under a system of representative institutions and responsible government. It is better, much better, for an Indian ruler to be the head of a democratic government and to rely on the support of his people than to occupy the very dubious and anxious position he does at present. He will then, if he is a just and wise ruler, be in a safer, freer and more dignified and influential position than he now; if he be unjust or vicious, he will not deserve any protection either from the present government or from Free India.

The population of the Indian States is about 72 millions, somewhat less than a third of the population of British India. The identity of sentiment and civilization of interest and aspiration between the two is unaffected by political barriers; and echoes of our Swaraj movement are heard in the States. The people of British India, when they are fighting for Swaraj, are entitled to have the Indian States brought into line with British India. Matters affecting the relations of the Government with Indian States or relating to the affairs of such States, ought not to be excluded, as they are at present, from the consideration of the central legislature. We in British India are, by ties of blood, religion, culture and business so intimately connected with those in the Indian States that it is impossible to deny them our help in their aspirations and in their grievances. The people of each State should have such representation in the Assembly as may be necessary to safeguard their interest till each Indian State obtains a system of responsible Government.

Greater India

The lineaments of our great ancestry reveal themselves in us today however thin in the transmission, the ancient blood has become. And the adventurous spirit of early India which built up long ago a greater *Bharat Varsha* to the East and to the West, to the North and to the South is not extinct. It is now

seen in the greater India which our brethren, in humble and laborious fashion, are building for us in far off lands against unparallelled odds. The status of Indians abroad, whether in South Africa or Kenya, in Fiji or Guiana, in Ceylon or Malaya, in America or Australia, depends inevitably upon the status of Indians in their own land; and Swaraj for India depends in its turn upon the brave and unfaltering spirit of our kith and kin across the seas.

The patient industry and skill of the Indian labourer wins rich fields of cereals and sugarcane plantations of rubber, tea and coffee and smiling gardens of fruit, flower and vegetable from virgin forests and unpromising lands amidst the hardships of unfamiliar countries and climates. He is, therefore induced with the permission of the Indian Government, to emigrate to distant countries where he lives a life of incessant toil and misery often unsweetened by the happiness of a real home. But when the need for his labour ceases, he is asked either to submit himself to humiliating conditions or given notice to quit. The position of Indians in South Africa and Kenya stands on a much worse footing while their claims to equality are distinctly greater. Indians abroad are of all classes and positions and should be entitled to full rights of citizenship there just as much as others. In any case, the term "cooly" connotes the dignity of labour and the Indian cooly settler, lowly as he is, is far superior in status to the original convict settler in Australia. No white man, I believe, refuses to employ an Indian on a lower wage, but his passion for improving the lot of Indians insists on their adoption of higher standards of living.

With patience and perseverance, our brethern are solving the qeustion of racial equality all over the world. We can help them only by winning Swaraj for India. In the meantime, the Kanpur resolution to open a foreign department to look after the interests of overseas Indians and to carry on propaganda concerning their status has to be sufficiently implemented. The deputation of our South African friends to India last year was an education in itself. I would suggest the holding once in a

way, of a session of the Congress in South Africa. Further, a small committee should be appointed to go to the principal foreign countries where Indians, whether traders, students, labourers or others reside so as to get into direct personal touth with them.

Asiatic Federation

The time has perhaps come for us seriously to think of a Federation of the Asiatic peoples for their common welfare. So long as our neighbours were ruled by irresponsible autocrats, such an idea was clearly out of the question. Now that Angora, Persia, China and Siberia are governed by democracies, a federation of Asiatic democracies will make for peace, prosperity and freedom of Asia and therefore comes within the range of practical politics. Signs are not wanting to indicate that our neighbours take keen interest in us and we must reciprocate it. In order to promote better understanding and closer relations between India and other Asiatic countries, frequent interchange of visits by appropriate delegations should be arranged, as well as other steps taken. We have too long neglected the possibilities of cultural and business union with all Asiatic countries.

Communalism and Nationalism

I have reserved, to the last, my remarks on the struggle between communalism and nationalism. The critical phase of the struggle is over and the issue is no longer in doubt. The riots and disturbances that have recently disfigured our social life have drawn forth nearly all that is bad in communalism. The forces of nationalism are steadily and visibly triumphing over the forces of communalism. The results of the elections in the Punjab and the United Provinces are as much due to serious division amongst Congressmen as to the confusion caused by communal cries Those two provinces have not, as it appears to me, given their verdict in favour of communalism. For the number of Congress candidates that succeeded there on

the Kanpur mandate is larger than the number that succeeded on the Hindu communal ticket.

In Bengal, Bihar, Madras and the rest of India, the answer of the electorates against communalism has been decisive. In Madras the electorates with the masses of the general population at their back have cashiered a communal party that for 6 years, thanks to Lord Willingdon, has been responsible for the acute tension of feeling between Brahmin and non-Brahmin. They have loyally supported the Congress ideals of nationalism, unity and justice and have effected a remarkable change in the atmosphere of the province. Electorates predominantly non-Brahmin in composition have returned, either unopposed, or after contest, Brahmin and non-Brahmin Nationalists to the local council and to the Assembly and the brunt of the fighting was borne by partiotic non-Brahmins, not less hungry than others for Swaraj. In Bihar, the loyalty to the Congress both amongst Hindus and Muslims has been very striking and the national harvest for Council and Assembly is abundant. In Bengal, the Congress party in the Council will be much stronger than before and communalism has been held in check, I feel sure Bengal will maintain, as ever. her political primacy.

That communalism is a negation of nationalism and is an obstacle to Swaraj, is being rapidly and very generally realised. I am confident that wherever intensive propaganda, sincere and persuasive, clearly analyses the fallacies underlying it, communalism will go to the wall. Happily, prejudice and suspicion are not deep-seated amongst Indian and communalism is but their off-spring. Again. who will not agree, after some political education, that communal conflicts necessarily involve that there should be an arbiter and that if the whole of India were divided into two warring communities, the arbiter would always be a foreigner? We must not only reach. but hold fast to, the conviction that we are Indians first and last and right through. National representation and national leadership must be our aim and not communal leadership and communal representation. A patriotic Hindu or Mussalman should, at all times and at all costs, desire to represent and lead not only his own com-

are not successful, and a three-fourth majority of the members of any community of the Congress party affected by such an inter-communal question consider that it should not be made a party question, then the Congress party in the legislature shall refrain from making it a party question.

Plea for Tolerance

In the early days of a world faith, again, conversion was of its essence. Though each community should be free to make conversions, no resort to conversion is really any longer useful or necessary. For, the lives of the best and most pious men in each community are a fitter and more effective propaganda in that behalf than definite missionary effort. But wherever the latter is made, it should be open and general and neither secret nor directed to the converting of particular man or woman. Let us realise that no great and long-established religion gains in truth, beauty or spirituality with any increase in its census figures.

It is not the hatred of another's religion or of those that profess it that the interest of one's own religion are advanced. Asoka in his Edict on tolerance proceeded on abundant experience and a clear perception of the "essence of the matter" as he calls *it*, and of real and lasting values. Says he : "He who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect."

Communal Representation

Moreover, no community can, in these days, really progress, in secular affairs unless the nation as a whole advances, unless in other words, the other communities either acquiesce in the rise of one community or make equal progress. The best way of advancing politically one's own community is, therefore, to raise the status of all the communities as a whole. For, if you seek to advance your own community, all the other communi-

ties band themselves together against yours. Communalism is not so much a positive idea of benefiting one's own community as a destructive desire to obtain advantages at the expense of the other communities. And how, one may well ask, is a community benefited by one of its members securing a post in government service or succeeding in an election ? If he conducts himself justly and honestly as a member of the public service, members of community can share only in the general good and can gain no undue advantage. If, on the other hand he favours them at the expenses of others, he will become unjust and corrupt. Again, what is every-day distrust between two individuals of the same community is dignified into communal distrust or tension when it arises between two individuals belonging to different communities, though, in both cases, the motive or cause, whether it be ambition or envy, bad temper or enmity, necessity or greed, difference in opinion or temperament may be the same.

That much abused expression of communal representation is a misnomer; for all the communities are equally interested in all public questions and in the country's problems and in particular solutions of them. Such differences as exist are temperamental and individual and not at all communal. Taxation and other burdens imposed by the State bear on all and grievances are common to all and methods of redress or agitation are not peculiar to a community. Nor is it by mathematical or mechanical formulae the justice between communities in the matter of the services or in other matters can be rendered. The Congress stands for equal rights and opportunities for all classes, castes and communities. And Indian nationalists are developing a high sense of justice; they are even sensitively just. Let us realize clearly that to uphold justice between man and man is to uphold justice between community and community. As a safeguard, a negative rule against members of any community or caste monopolising office is all that is required. There are so many communities and there is so much of competition in these days in India that it is impossible for any community to create such a monopoly. Again, neither a Hindu nor a Muslim member can at all represent his religion in a Legislative Council

on any question except where his religion is sought to be affected.

Politics and Religion

The intrusion into politics of religion, and very often of dogmatic religion, must be resisted as a primitive or mediaeval idea, born of theocracies, and disastrous alike to religion and to politics. Hinduism and Islam will gain immeasurably in strength and purity if they are not mixed up with secular politics. I do not speak of morality or of that spritual quality which is common to all great religions; for thereby politics and organizations are cleansed and made sweet and wholesome. In the evolution of States, theocracies have not survived as they were responsible for fanaticism, persecution and internal strife and neglected the material welfare of the people and the proper arts of government.

Hinduism and Islam

Lastly, let us clearly grasp the truth that neither Hinduism nor Islam stands in danger of being destroyed by the other. Both are great religions, ages old; and both have an abiding hold on vast populations. They have again and again come into severe conflict with each other and have survived it, as they have survived the shocks of foreign invasions and foreign civilizations and all other catastrophic changes. In mediaeval conditions, Hinduism and Islam both continued to flourish in full vigour, independent of the religion of powerful despots who were backed up by their own communities, numerous and armed. In modern times, when there is far greater religious tolerance, and when autocracies have been replaced by democracies and democracies are notoriously secular in their outlook and priestly influence has largely declined, it is wholly chimerical to imagine that if either the Hindus or the Mohammedans in a province constitute a majority in a democratic form of Government, the religion of the minority will suffer. No proselytizing can equal the hearty crusading fervour of early and mediaeval times; and the two great religions of India have in spite of

innumerable conversions and re-conversions adjusted and consolidated themselves and have acquired an adamantine stability. A Hindu State that attempts with all its authority to destroy Islam will be subverted in a minute and a similar fate will befall a Muslim State that attempts to destroy Hinduism.

Let us not forget, in the fever of political controversy, that the strength of each religion is derived from God and is rooted in souls of Prahlads. Not all the tortures of a Torquemada nor all the burning at the stakes nor all other forms of prosecution have been able to destroy the mystic quality of the human soul. Neither Hinduism nor Islam derives or requires strength either from the present or from any future Government. Both stand far, far above Swaraj which is not comparable to them. Neither foreign Governments nor self-Governments, neither democracies nor autocracies, can destroy that seed of faith which is in every one of us, that inspired interpretation of the universe to which one clings for guidance and solace in this world and for salvation in the next. Hindus and Mussalmans have lived in the past and will live in the future as patriotic fellow citizens and firm and loyal friends. In the transaction of public affairs, in all matters of secular advancement, in all aspects of the administration and on all public, political and national questions, they easily can and should think and act as Indians. I fervently appeal to Hindu and Mussalman leaders with all the strength of my feeble voice to consider the need for concerted action in a calm and dispassionate spirit and to unite indissolubly for their common deliverance.

Appeal for Unity

It appears to me that the vision of Swaraj has become somewhat dim in the dust of internal strife and our hunger for it less keen in our greater desire for the philosophy of individualism. The need of the hour is not philosophy but action, not freedom for the individual but freedom for the nation, not alone unity in ideal and object, but also unity in method and action, direction and pace, and above all, not polemics and projects but organization and discipline, first and last and right through.

The question naturally suggests itself : Should we have distinct parties in the country or in the Congress ? I know the weight of names is against me, but I would beg a calm and earnest examination of the question with Swaraj brain and Swaraj heart. The answer comes again and again from the depths of our being, from the holy of holies, from our tortured soul, that the righteous should link hands against unrighteousness There can be only two parties in India, the party of the Government and its adherents that obstructs Swaraj, and the party that fights visibly and unceasingly for Swaraj. An army has several arms, but it would be a singular army indeed if its cavalry fought its infantry and its artillery opened fire on both. The duties of all groups or parties in the country and in the Congress is vigorously to cooperate with one another in their fight for Swaraj just as the arms of a sensible army will do in a real war.

I deprecate the philosophy of individualism in a supreme struggle for freedom against a powerful people with their trained bureaucracy and with unlimited material resources. On a question whether a particular course is wise or unwise, will succeed or fail, will accelerate Swaraj or retard it, to make one's opinion or judgment or feeling a matter of conscience is false philosophy. On a point of religion, of morality, of honour, one's own conscience must be the arbiter, but in transacting the affairs of a country, when a decision is not irreligious, immoral or dishonourable. I fail to see how we may rely on our right to differ from one another and yet uphold the discipline necessary for an organization fighting for Swaraj. If the soldiers in any army claim similar right when engaged in a battle they will have short shrift at the enemy's hands. We want freedom for our country and must, therefore, pay the price for it.

Again, shall we cease to be constantly on the alert and prefer the easier to the harder way, retreat to advance ? Shall we avoid taking prompt decisions, refrain from action when a decision has been come to or indulge the critical mood ? Shall we not concentrate on the imparting of new momentum, the attracting of fresh recruits and the consolidation and stiffening of our

ranks? Or, shall we relax our wills and substitute patience for impatience, little things for big things, discretion for valour, policy for truth, dogma for faith, and sweet reasonableness for stern determination.

Do we feel that we are unfit to undertake the Government of the country ? Is it not actually run by Indian officials and are not the English overseers merely concerned in laying down policies which their Indian subordinates and colleagues who are in no better position than subordinates, are obliged to carry out ? The machinery of the Government is already there, only the directing brain and voice are needed and that surely can be supplied by us.

What is needed to break our bonds is only that we should get rid of this creeping paralysis of brain and will, of this hypnotism which the foreigner exercises over the Indian official and un-official, whether his opponent or his friend. The conditions in India are so favourable to the immediate attainment of Swaraj that it were an easy achievement if we could but set our hands to it. One or two men in every village or town have but to shoulder the responsibilities of a real and lasting leadership. Character and transparent patriotism, steady courage and average ability are all that is needed for the purpose. We have been trying to build leadership from above which is an impossible process and from abroad which is a destructive process. We must build leadership from the base and on the spot itself. Efficient local leadership alone and not propaganda or programmes of sorts will solve the problem. For, Swaraj means the ability to set up a local Panchayat or leader that will command continuously the loyal and energetic support of the people in the locality.

With the greatest fervour and in all humility, I would appeal to all leaders, all groups of workers and all schools of thought, in and outside the Congress, to put aside all differences for one brief year and stand together as comrades in arms determined to win freedom. We all, whether Swarajists, Resopnsivists, Independents or others, long for unity; and none

among us is anxious to emphasise or perpetuate differences. But we all long equally ardently for Swaraj. May I, therefore, request all friends, whether they agree or not with all that I have said, to see if it is not possible to reconcile the longing unity with the longing for Swaraj, without affecting either and in such a way and by such methods as shall amaze and baffle and discomfit the Government in India and in England at this critical hour.

We can restore our faith in ourselves only by restoring our faith in each other, for without an atmosphere of energetic goodwill and of freedom from suspicion and prejudice, it is impossible to perfect the work of organization that we have begun or to reimpose the splendid discipline that staggered the world till the 10th of March, 1922.

Conclusion

Swaraj is not an intellectual but an emotional proposition. We must cherish it in our hearts withunque nchable faith. Neither genial humour nor mordant sarcasm, neither the persuasion of friends nor the wrath of foes, neither appreciation nor calumny should make our patriotism tepid or qualify the singleness of our purpose. We must, therefore, become possessed by a passion for Swaraj that is not warped by fallacies and impulses, that will stand for a uniform and rapid corporate advance in serried masses, that will know no obstacles, that will not wax and wane with the seasons, that will not be daunted by imprisonments or depressed by failures.

6

UNITY, UNITY, UNITY*

Fellow-Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I find it difficult to put into words my deep sense of gratitude at the confidence you have placed in me by calling upon me to preside over the deliberations of the Indian National Congress at this critical juncture in the history of our struggle for freedom. This meeting of the Congress, at Madras, takes me back to the day more than a quarter of a century ago when as an under, graduate, full of hope and enthusiasm, I had my first glimpse of our great national gathering. Little did I dream then that in that very city it would fall to my lot to occupy the chair which has been filled in the past by some of the greatest sons of India. Our National movement has increased in force and volume since those days. The political awakening of the people has become widespread, the intensity of the the struggle has become more severe and, with the march of time, the problems we were called upon to solve have grown more and more complex. The task of your President has, in consequence, become delicate and difficult. It was only the hope that I could count your indulgence towards my shortcomings and your generous support in the discharge of my duties that encouraged me to undertake this heavy responsibility.

The inter-depenence of political problems in different countries and the dangers arising out of the economic and political bondage of India to the peaceful progress of humanity at large, specially to the interests of the workers in Great Britain, are being gradually realised and while Imperialist and Capita-

*Presidential address delivered by Dr. M. A. Ansari at the Madras Congress held on 26-28 December, 1927.

list interests are carrying on an organised campaign of misrepresentation and vilification against India in order to justify and perpetuate its exploitation and subservience, the presence, among us today, of the distinguished fraternal delegates from across the seas, gives hope that fellow-victims of Imperialism and Capitalism in other parts of the world have begun to appreciate the necessity of closer cooperation and joint action to fight the common enemy. I offer these friends a sincere and cordial welcome on behalf of the Indian National Congress and the people of India.

A matter of greater pleasure and satisfaction to me is that my appeal for a reunited Congress has met with such a generous response. I rejoice to find among us once more veterans and tried champions whose names are inseparably associated with India's fight for freedom. I cordially welcome all these comrades and fellow-workers back to the fold of the Congress and hope and pray that, as in the past so in the future, the country will derive the fullest benefit from their service.

India and Imperialism

In the statement published sometime back, I had touched upon the salient features of the existing political situation and briefly expressed my own views regarding the most effective method of dealing with it. I do not, therefore, propose to address you at great length today. But even in a brief survey we must take into account every issue that has a direct bearing on the furtherance of our political programme. All schools of political thought in India are agreed that the goal of our activities is a free issue that has and a Self-governing India, offering equal opportunities to all and recognising and guaranteeing the just and legitimate rights of all section and classes, at peace within herself and friendly with the rest of the world. Indians do not claim anything more or less than that they shall occupy the same position and enjoy the same rights in their country as free people do in their own. If this can be achieved within the Empire they have no desire to break away from it but if the Imperial connection stands in the way of our reaching the goal

we should not hesitate to sever that connection. Our motto in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, should be "within the Empire if possible, without if necessary."

I do not minimise the difficulties in our path. They are many but none so formidable as the one arising out of the aggressiveness of Imperialism and the greed of High Finance, the two most fruitful sources of trouble and misery in the world today. Empires are carved and nations are deprived of their liberties to satisfy the Imperialist ambition and to monopolise resources in raw materials to feed the factories in Europe and to secure exclusive markets for their output.

Politicians and statesmen were eloquent over the "mission civilisatrice" and the "whiteman's burden" but none has exposed the hollowness of these professions better than Cecil Rhodes, the great pioneer of Imperialism in South Africa, when he said, "pure philanthropy is very well in its way but philanthropy plus five per cent is a good deal better." Joseph Chamberlain, that High Priest of Imperialism, was more outspoken. "The Empire" he said, "is commerce", and India, he was frank enough to add, was "by far the greatest and the most valuable of all the customers we have or ever shall have." The history of this philanthropic burglary on the part of Europe is written in blood and suffering from Congo to Canton. The steel-frame theory of government, the arrogant claims to trusteeship of dumb millions and the newly-invented illusion to cloak the pre-war Concert of Europe, known as the League of Nations, are but different manifestations of the same spirit. So long as these dangerous doctrines are pursued the sources of human misery shall endure. India holds in her hands the remedy for this universal misfortune, for she is the key-stone of the arch of Imperialism. Once India is free the whole edifice will collapse. The best guarantee for the freedom of Asia and the peace of the world is a free and self-governing India.

Congress Policies

The problem then is how to free India. For over a generation the leaders of public opinion in the country advocated and

practised a policy of complete cooperation with the Government. That policy was doomed to failure from its very inception. Cooperation is possible between groups with common ideals. Where objects pursued are diametrically opposed there can be no cooperation. Cooperation in such circumstances can only mean surrender of the most cherished ideals on the part of the weak to the wishes and desires of the strong. The difference between the ideals of the two nations is nowhere brought out more vividly or in greater relief than in the report of the late Mr. Montagu, a Liberal Secretary of State for India, noted for his Pro-Indian sympathies. The report, which forms the basis of the Government of India Act of 1919, while promising progressive realisation of responsible government and extending lavish hopes for the future, clearly lays down. "It seems to us axiomatic that there connot be a completely representative and responsible Government of India on an equal footing with the other self-governing units of the British Commonwealth until the component States whose people it represents and to whom it is responsible, or at least the great majority of them, have themselves reached the stage of full responsible Government. Nor even then can we say that the forum or the degree of responsibility which will be reached in India will exactly correspond to that attained by the Dominions. The final form of India's constitution must be evolved out of the conditions of India, and must be materially affected by the need for securing Imperial responsibilities."

If, however, our rulers forsake their divine mission of civilising "the inferior races" and cease to act the executors of the decrees of providence, if they realise that a friendly and free India will be a better customer than a sullen and hostile dependency kept under political and economic bondage, in short if they recognise that there are civilisations and cultures equally good, if not better than their own, if they cease to think in terms of the ruler and the ruled and are prepared to meet us on terms of equality, it will then be time for us to revise our views on Cooperation.

An alternative policy advocated, on the set-back received

by the Non-cooperation Movement, was to capture the Councils and by creating constitutional deadlocks, force the Government to yield to the wishes of the people. The advocates of this policy, however, failed to give its proper weight to the fact that the limitations imposed by the Government of India Act of 1919, rendered all such opposition ineffective and the creation of constitutional deadlocks a practical impossibility. They, no less than the advocates of the policy of Cooperation, should have realised that an ultra-constitutional issue could not be fought on a strictly constitutional plane. In a trial of strength there can be no hope of success if your opponent is also the referee. Practical experience has demonstrated the futility of such a policy even in provinces, where the believers in this method commanded a majority.

They undoubtedly succeeded in exposing the hollowness of the so-called Reforms and by preventing the Government from packing legislatures with "safe" persons, they made it impossible for the rulers to present their autocratic and high-handed actions as representing the declared will of the people expressed through its chosen representatives. But all this has not materially advanced our cause, nor has it brought us any nearer our goal, while the price paid for it is too dear. It has diverted the energies of some of our ablest men from problems of real national importance. The Council Programme, adopted at a time of depression, was professedly in the nature of an experiment. We gave it a trial and if it has not fulfilled our expectations, there is no reason to feel discouraged or disappointed. Let us revise our policy in the light of our past experience.

There are no two opinions regarding our goal. We all desire to see India free and self-governing. For the achievement of our object we are not wedded to any particular policy, nor do we consider any programme sacrosanct or binding for ever. We have to judge a policy or a programme by its suitability to our peculiar social and political conditions, by its practicability and by the results which it is likely to give within a measurable period of time. We have now before us the results of the three experiments made by the Congress during the last forty years.

We gave an unbroken period of thirty five years to Cooperation, about year and a half to Non-cooperation and four years to the policy of obstruction within the Councils and Constitutional Deadlocks. We can, at this stage, appraise the real value of each programme and judge the comparative merits and demerits of each. Cooperation has led us nowhere. Obstruction within the Councils has not given us any better result. Non-cooperation certainly did not achieve all that was expected of it but it was through our own weakness and inability to rise to the high level demanded by it and not through any inherent defect of that policy. Non-cooperation did not fail us, we failed Non-cooperation. We did receive an unquestionable and a serious set-back in the first encounter. I also admit that in the present atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hatred created by deplorable communal quarrels and with the whole country divided into hostile political camps and factious groups, there is no prospect of an immediate resumption of Non cooperation. The spirit of Non-cooperation, however, has come to stay as a potent force in Indian politics and as I have said elsewhere, "I feel as certain as ever that apart from any very extraordinary and unexpected occurrences we shall win back our freedom only by self-discipline, self-organisation and self-help and through a movement in which we would be obliged to resort to direct action in some shape or form. I firmly believe that India is only recuperating from the moral and material effects of a disastrous way and would soon emerge once more resuscitated and re-juvenated to attain what it is destined to attain."

How best then can we help this process of resuscitation and rejuvenation and prepare ourselves for the next encounter? It is my unshakable belief that this cannot be done unless we have established Unity in the Country, Unity in the Congress and Unity in the Councils, if people must still make use of them. Differences of opinion are inevitable. They have existed and will continue to exist. What we have to learn is the stage at which these differences, if persisted in, become injurious to the general interest of the country. We must learn to differentiate between personal prestige and public weal and to sacrifice individual gain to the collective good.

Unity in the Country

Hindu-Muslim Relations

There is no feature of the Indian political situation more disquieting than the shameful quarrels between Hindus and Musalmans. No language can be too strong to condemn murderous assaults and callous destruction of life and property in riotings which occur with such painful frequency. Hardly a day passes when we do not hear of some violent outburst of communal fury in one part of the country or the other leaving its legacy of bitterness and hatred threatening to reduce the country to one vast camp of warring communal factions bent on destroying each other. It is due to this that the Congress itself has lost in popularity. It is being relegated in many Provinces to a secondary position and preference is being given to communal organisations specially those which are militant. This state of affairs must not be allowed to continue any longer. The problem of Hindu-Muslim differences must be solved once and for all and there is no organisation more competent and better fitted to put an end to it than the Indian National Congress.

While attempting to solve the Hindu-Muslim question we should not, however, mistake the symptom for the disease. The political and religious differences which are straining the relations between the two communities are but outward manifestations of a deeper conflict, not peculiar to India or unknown to history. It is essentially a problem of two different cultures, each with its own out-look on life, coming in close contact with one another. The best remedy lies in a recognition of the right of each culture to exist, in a development of a spirit of tolerance and respect and in the encouragement and cultivation of cultural affinity by the establishment of national institutions where young people of both the communities will come into touch with each other and get opportunities to study and understand the ideals underlying the civilisations of both. The educated Indian is forced by circumstances to study European culture but knows next to nothing about the culture of his fellow-countryman living next door. It is time the dangerous isolation

and colossal ignorance were ended. With knowledge of each other's deep-rooted sentiments and sympathy for each other's ideals, questions of separate representation, cow slaughter and music before mosques will become matters of the past, of interest only to research scholars of Indian history.

In the meantime, we cannot afford to minimise or neglect the problem which faces us today. There are certain fundamental facts which it will be well for Hindus and Muslims to remember. They should not forget that they are Indians destined to live in India and die in India. Providence has bound their fates together indissolubly. If there be any Hindu brother of mine who imagines that he can get rid of seventy millions of his Muslim fellow-countrymen he is labouring under a great delusion and the sooner he is disillusioned the better for him and the country. Similarly, if any Muslim brother of mine is dreaming of lording it over two hundred and fifty millions of his Hindu countrymen he is living in a fool's paradise and the sooner he opens his eyes the better for the Muslim community and India.

The Swaraj we are striving for will be neither Hindu Raj nor Muslim Raj. It will be a joint Raj protecting the just and legitimate rights and privileges of all. Perpetual warfare cannot be the normal state of human society. The worker in the communal cause apparently wishes to improve the economic, political and educational position of his community. With this I have no quarrel. But for any solid and lasting good to be done either to a group or to a nation, tranquillity and peace are essential conditions. Violent communal outbursts may benefit any other Party, they certainly cannot benefit the country, nor do they serve even exclusive communal interests.

Instead of resorting to these barbarous methods of settling differences I would appeal to my countrymen to make use of the great national tribunal, the custodian of the rights and privileges of all sections and communities inhabiting this country, the Indian National Congress, for the protection of their rights and the redress of their grievances.

A subject people trying to shake off foreign domination cannot afford to carry on an internecine struggle. We cannot in one breath talk of freedom and such communalism, for, they are the very anti-thesis of each other. It would be difficult for an outside observer to believe in the genuineness of our demand when he observes the fratricidal war we are waging today. Our very patriotism begins to appear a sham.

In our efforts to gain a little advantage here and a little advantage there over our rivals, we are unconsciously playing into the hands of the common adversary whose position is being strengthened everyday. Can we not all with one joint effort and determination get rid of this degrading mentality? Self-respect, even self-interest requires us to enlarge our vision and look beyond momentary and sectional advantage to the lasting national gain.

Hindu-Muslim Differences

The causes of communal antagonism exercising the minds of the leaders of the two communities as brought out at the various Unity Conference crystallise themselves into two distinct groups—political and religious.

Political Differences

It will serve no useful purpose to enter into a description of how the Musalmans, fearing that the sense of political responsibility of majority was not sufficiently advanced to trust it with the protection of their rights, demanded separate representation and separate electorates. It is a matter of past history and everyone in this assembly is fully aware of it. It is enough for our present purpose to state that, realising the disastrous consequences recent developments were likely to lead to, the Indian National Congress, at its annual session last year at Gauhati, called upon the All-India Congress Committee, to devise measure for a settlement of the trouble in these terms:

"This Congress calls upon the Working Committee to take immediate steps in consultation with the Hindu and Musalman leaders to devise measures for the removal of the present deplo-

rable disturbances between Hindus and Musalmans and submit a report to the All India Congress Committee, not later than the 31st March 1927. This Congress authorises the All-India Congress Committee to issue the necessary instructions in that behalf to all Congressmen in the country and take such other steps as it may deem fit after consideration of the said report."

The President got into touch with the leaders of public opinion in both the communities. He travelled extensively all over the country to mobilise the good sense and active cooperation of both communities and, finally, arranged a series of conversations at Delhi. It is a great tribute to the sincerity, zeal and indefatigable energy of Mr. Srinivasa Iyyengar, that a formula for settlement of outstanding political differences was at last discovered. I would be lacking in my duty if I did not place on record the appreciation of the Indian National Congress of the spirit of patriotism and statesmanship displayed by the Muslim leaders who rose above prejudice, suspicion and narrow communal outlook and boldly came forward with the proposals which presage a new orientation of Muslim policy in India.

The Working Committee, at its meeting held on the 15th May, "considered the proposals made by the representative Muslim leaders who met in Delhi, on the 20th March last, as well as the opinion of the Hindu Mahasabha and other Hindu organisations and the opinions of other leaders and representatives of both communities" and submitted its report to the All-India Congress Committee on the 16th May, 1927. The resolution, embodying the recommendations of the Working Committee passed by the All India Congress Committee, with the unanimous support of all the members present including some of the foremost leaders of the Hindu Maha Sabha, speaks volumes for the political sagacity of the Committee and was a personal triumph for the President and his great powers of persuasion.

"The AICC approves and adopts the report of the Working

Committee on the Hindu-Muslim question and the recommendations contained therein and calls upon all Congress organisation to take necessary steps to have the following recommendations carried out:

Joint Electrorates

That in any future scheme of constitution, so far as representation in the various legislature is concerned, joint electorates in all the Provinces and in the Central Legislature be constituted.

Reservation of Seats

That, with a view to give full assurances to the two great communities that their legitimate interests will be safeguarded in the Legislatures for the present and if desire, of such representation of the communities should be secured by the reservation of seats in joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature.

Provided that reciprocal concessions in favour of minorities including the Sikhs in the Punjab may be made by mutual agreement so as to give them representation in excess of the proportion of the number of seats to which they would be entitled on the population basis in any province or provinces and the proportions so agreed upon for the provinces shall be maintained in the representation of the two communities in the Central Legislature from the provinces.

N.W.F. Province and British Baluchistan

That the proposal made by the Muslim leaders that reforms should be introduced in the NWFP and British Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces is, in the opinion of the Committee, a fair and reasonable one, and should be given effect to, care being taken that simultaneously with other measures of administrative reform an adequate system of judicial administration shall be introduced in the said provinces.

Separation of Sind from Bombay

(i) That with regard to the proposal that Sind should be

constituted into a separate province, this Committee is of opinion that the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on linguistic basis—a principle that has been adopted by the constitution of the Congress.

(ii) The Committee is also of opinion that such readjustment of provinces be immediately taken in hand and that any province which demands such reconstitution on linguistic basis be dealt with accordingly.

(iii) The Committee is further of opinion that a beginning may be made by constituting Andhra, Sind and Karnataka into separate provinces.

Liberty of Conscience

That, in the future Constitution, liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed and no legislature, central or provincial, shall have power to make any laws interfering with liberty of conscience.

'Liberty of Conscience' means liberty of belief and worship, freedom or religious observances and association and freedom to carry on religious education and propaganda with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with similar rights of others.

Inter-Communal Matters

That no Bill, Resolution, Motion or Amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, central or provincial if three fourths majority of the members of either community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such Bill, Resolution, Motion or Amendment.

'Inter-communal matters' means matters agreed upon as such by a Joint Standing Committee of both communities, of the Hindu and Muslim members of the legislatures concerned, appointed at the commencement of every session of the legislature."

This resolution is a great advance on the Lucknow Pact of

1916, which has so far regulated Hindu-Muslim relations. Its terms are so clear that there is no need of any further comment from me. I should, however, like to emphasise the importance of the decision regarding joint electorates. The one great cause of friction so far has been separate electorates. If the success of a candidate at elections depends entirely on the votes of his co-religionists, the tendency to exaggerate and accentuate points of communal friction and division in order to catch votes is inevitable. The resolution, while making the fullest possible allowance for the fear of minorities regarding adequate protection, by reservation of seats, presents fresh opportunities for the development of a spirit of friendliness and mutual confidence, the best augury for a United India.

The acceptance of the principle of representation on the basis of population puts our electoral system on a just and equitable basis. It puts an end, on the one hand, to the dissatisfaction felt at the preferential treatment accorded to minorities and, on the other, removes the grievance of the majorities in Bengal and the Punjab which were reduced to minorities. At the same time, the special interests of minorities have been safeguarded by the provision that if a three-fourths majority of their representatives opposed any measure affecting its interests it shall not be even discussed or moved.

The right of the Indian National Congress to settle communal differences has been challenged in certain quarters. It has been contended that the Congress has no jurisdiction in inter-communal matters, whether political or religious. I hold that no communal organisation or organisations put together can supersede the Congress or enjoy even a parallel jurisdiction. The Indian National Congress is not meant for registering the decrees issued by the different communal organisations. It is primarily and essentially the only organisation that can deal with such matters and hold the balance even between community and community. If leaders of communal groups can come to a just and amicable agreement on any question agitating the minds of their respective communities, the Congress would unhesitatingly welcome it. But if they fail to arrive at an agreement the

Congress as the paramount national organisation must step in and perform its obvious duty of adjusting communal relations and preserving communal peace and harmony undeterred by petulent threats and challenges from angry and disgrunted communalists.

Religious Differences

So far as political differences are concerned the Congress adopted a satisfactory formula for their solution at Bombay. But religious and social points of difference still remained to be settled and the President gave the leaders of the two communities an opportunity at Simla, to come to an agreement on them. When the protracted negotiations ended in a fiasco the president took advantage of the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to be held at Calcutta and issued invitations to prominent Hindu and Muslim leaders to give the Committee the benefit of their advice and help him and the Committee to complete the good work begun at Bombay. The result of these efforts is summed up in the two resolutions passed at the Unity Conference and adopted by the All-India Congress Committee.

1. CONVERSION : The All-India Congress Committee resolves that every individual or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert another by argument or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert another by argument or persuasion but no individual or group shall attempt to do so or prevent its being done, by force, fraud or other unfair means such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under eighteen years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under eighteen years of age is found stranded without his parents or guardian by persons of another faith, he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy as to the person, place, time or manner about any conversion or reconversion, nor should there be any demonstration or jubilation in support of any conversion or reconversion.

"Whenever any complaint is made in respect of any conversion or reconversion, that it was effected in secrecy or by force, fraud or other unfair means, or whenever any per-

son under eighteen years of age is converted, the matter shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators who shall be appointed by the Working Committee either by name or under general regulations."

2. Cow and Music: "The All-India Congress Committee while approving of the following resolution on the Cow and Music question as a fair settlement of opposite demands and points-of-view, authorises members of the Congress to carry on propaganda among Hindus and Muslims along the lines indicated in the resolution and calls upon the Working Committee to appoint a Sub-committee for the purpose of carrying on such propaganda.

And further resolves that the resolution do come up for confirmation at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and the Congress to be held in Madras:

Whereas no community in India should impose or seek to impose its religious obligations or religious views upon any other community but the free profession and practice of religion should, subject to public order and morality, be guaranteed to every community and person.

Hindus are at liberty to take processions and play music before any mosque at any time for religious or other purposes but there should be no stoppage of the professions nor special demonstrations in front of a mosque, nor shall the songs or music sung or played in front of a mosque be such as is calculated to cause annoyance or special disturbance to the worshippers in the mosque.

Muslims are at liberty to sacrifice cows or, subject to existing municipal laws regulating the slaughter of animals for purposes of food, to slaughter cows, in any town or village, in any place not being a thoroughfare, nor one in the vicinity of a temple or a mandir nor one exposed to the gaze of Hindus.

Cows should not be led in profession or in demonstrations for sacrifice or slaughter.

Having regard to the deep-rooted sentiment of the Hindu community in the matter of cow-killing, the Muslim community is earnestly appealed to, so to conduct the cow sacrifice or slaughter as not to cause annoyance to the Hindus of the town or village concerned.

"Whenever a complaint is made that any of the provisions of this resolution have contravened, it shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators appointed by the Working Committee by name or under general regulations and their decision shall be final."

Efforts at composing communal differences in the past have been handicapped by attemps on the part of one community to impose restrictions on the enjoyment of its rights by the other. The result was that instead of removing mistrust and suspicion and creating a respect for each other's religious sentiments the solution generally led to a further intensification of the strife. The resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee are based on the recognition of complete freedom of each community to enjoy its rights subject to minimum restrictions necessary for peaceful corporate social life. The fear of any curtailment of their rights having been once removed, an appeal to the higher sentiments of the two communities, to their spirit of toleration and forbearance, is bound to have greater chance of success. It is not impossible that each community may even voluntarily forego a portion of the enjoyment of its rights out of regard for the sentiments and feelings of the other.

The Congress has given a definite lead. It has described a potent remedy to eradicate the communal canker which has been eating into the very vitals of our body politic. It is now for us Congressmen to carry on a vigorous propaganda to explain and popularise these resolutions and to bring them home to the Hindu and Muslim Public all over the country. I earnestly appeal to every well-wisher of India, irrespective of his political creed, to lend a helping hand to the Congress in this noble cause. Specially do I appeal to the Press of the country to realise its great responsibility in the matter. There is no

other agencies which plays such an important part in the moulding of public opinion and the regulation of inter-communal relations. It is a powerful instrument for good or for evil and I regret to say that throughout this unhappy communal crisis, our Press, especially the Vernacular Press, has not exercised its influence for the good.

With very few noble exceptions it has actualy fanned the flames of conflict and shown a lamentable lack in the discharge of its duties, I cannot have any complaint against the Anglo-Indian newspapers. They naturally serve the interests that maintain them. But is it too much to expect from our own journals and journalists that they will subordinate their selfish considerations to the supreme interest of common national good and ally themselves with forces working for the restoration of concord and unity? The conduct of News-Agencies in the country has not been altogether satisfactory either. Let us hope that they too will contribute their share to the restoration and maintenance of unity in the country. Let us all realise that it is a matter of life and death for us and on the success of our efforts to achieve unity in the country depends the whole future of India.

If I have discussed at length the question of Hindu-Muslim differences it is because like the ubiquitous microbe it has infected every sphere of our national activity. I am conscious that the question of Hindu-Muslim relations is only a part of the broader problem of the rights of minorities and backward classes. The Sikh in the North and the non-Brahmans in the South and the so-called Depressed Classes all over India, equally deserves our close attention. I do not propose to deal at length with the Sikhs or on the non-brahmans but I cannot resist the temptation of putting in a plea on behalf of the millions of "untouchables". The removals of untouchability, although a problem essentially for our Hindu brothers to solve, must still be a matter of the deepest concern to every Indian inasmuch as the presence of such a large section of our fellow-countrymen suffering under grievous social and political disabilities cannot but retard our efforts for the emancipation of

our country.

Unity in the Congress

Next in importance to the re-establishment of communal harmony is the question of the reorganisation of the Congress on a wider basis. The setback we received in the Non-cooperation movement told heavily on the Congress. The keen enthusiasm of the palmy days of 1920 and 1921, when every city and every village had a Congress Committee of its own, began to cool down and, with the outbreak of communal dissensions gave place to apathy and in cases, fortunately rare, to open hostility to the Congress. The communal question having been settled on the lines of the Bombay and Calcutta resolutions measures must be adopted to make the Congress franchise popular and to induce all communities to join the Congress in large numbers. I am glad our non-Brahmana friends have decided to come back to us and it gives me great pleasure to see them so well represented here today.

It is, however, a matter of deep regret that the number of Muslims and Sikhs has dwindled considerably. The cace of the Parsis, who took such a leading part in the early life of the Congress, is worse still. I wish particularly to address the Indian Christians who have so far kept themselves aloof as a body from the Congress. I should like to tell them that if they are under the impression that they can serve the interests of their community by remaining outside the Congress they should take a lesson from the experience of my co-religionists. The Musalmans of India allied themselves with forces other than national for a number of years and after bitter experience found out that they could advance their interests only by joining the Indian National Congress and making common cause with the rest of their countrymen. The Indian Christians will serve their community better by giving up their policy of isolation and adopting an Indian national outlook. I should like to see every section of our people entering into a healthy rivalry to contribute its share to the conduct of national affairs through the Congress. The doors of the Congress should be thrown wide open to all parties and we should stop at nothing short of a

surrender of basic principles to bring back every party to the Congress.

Differences of opinion are bound to exist but the best and the only place to fight them out is and should be the common platform of the mother of all political organisations in India, the Indian National Congress. Each party has an unrestricted right and opportunity to convince the Congress of the correctness of its point of view and to enlist the support of the majority for the policy it advocates. If the majority rightly or wrongly fails to appreciate the correctness of that policy, until we have found a substitute for the rule of majorities, the only democratic and workable principle is to respect the decision of the majority. This does not mean that the minority loses its right to continue its endeavours to convert itself into the majority. Differences in detail or method should not be made the occasion of secession from the parent organisation and the setting up of a separate party outside. Multiplicity of parties on minor differences is bad enough for countries already free and independent.

We, who are fighting for our elemental rights, cannot afford to indulge in the luxury of a cramping and complicated system of parties. A great responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Indian intelligentia whose duty it is to educate the masses to a realisaiion of their rights and privileges. The confusion caused by the existence of a number of parties leads to distraction and the great work of the uplift of the masses remains neglected. Let us concentrate on the largest common measure of agreement rather than emphasise points of disagreement. After all the points on which we agree are many and those on which we disagree but few.

Unity in the Councils

I do not believe in the Councils. At the same time I am aware that the Congress has permitted its members, if they so desire, to enter the Councils and a considerable number of my fellow-workers believe that they can render useful service to the country from inside them. To all these I humbly suggest

that if they must go to the Councils the least that the country expects of them is that instead of allowing their opponents to take advantage of the division in their ranks they will join forces with other nationalist groups to form a people's Party of Opposition and present a united front. As it is, on a majority of problems the various nationalist groups have been invariably found in the sarre lobby. The instructions issued by the Congress for work inside the Councils can form a good basis for unity of action. Should any alterations in these instructions be found necessary to facilitate joint action, it is always open to any group to come to the Congress and press its viewpolnt. And whatever decision the Congress gives should be loyally obeyed by all.

The Statutory Commission

"In the good old days" we always looked forward with eagerness to the conferring of "boons" by our rulers. Wel Providence in its "merciful dispensation" has conferrd uponl us a real boon in the shape of the Statutory Commission. The manner in which the declared wishes and sentiments of the Indian people have been contemptuously disregarded should serve as an eye-opener even to the most confirmed optimist among us. It is the strongest and the most convincing plea for the sinking of our differences and closing up of our ranks. Much has been said and written on the Commission but little, as it seems to me, which touches the heart of the matter. Keen disappointment and surprise have been expressed at the exclusion of Indians from its personnel. I must confess I do not share any of these feelings. I am neither disappointed nor surprited.

This was exactly what I had anticipated. It is not a question of the appointment of a Hindu peer or a Muslim knight, nor is it a question whither Indians should participate in its work as members, assessors or advisors. The principle involved is totally different. It is basic and fundamental. No sane or self-respecting Indian can ever admit the claim of Great Britain to be the sole judge of the measure and time of India's political advance. We alone know our needs and requirements best, and

ours must be the decisive voice in the determination of our future. It is our inherent and an alienable right. Taking its stand on these principles the Congress has all along advocated the convening of a Round Table Conference of the representatives of India and Great Britain. with plenipotentiary powers to decide the bases of the future constitution of India, to be incorporated into an Act of Parliament.

It is only on these conditions that Indians can consistently with national honour and dignity agree to cooperate. Until Great Britain accepts these terms the Indian National Congress has no other alternative but to ask the people of India to treat the Statutory Commission as our Egyptian brothers treated the Milner mission, and leave it severely alone. We can have no part or lot in a Commission which has been appointed in direct defiance of the declared will of the people of India.

Need for a Constitution

The advent of the Statutory Commission should not divert our attention from the work of framing a constitution for India. The need for it had been felt for a long time and at the Bombay meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, the Working Committee was called upon to draw up, in consultation with leaders of political thought in the country, a suitable constitution for India. A Constitution of this nature would remove suspense and doubt from the minds of the different communities regarding their position and status in the final political arrangement of the country. It would rally the different political parties round the Congress and prove of incalculable value in the education of the people in their political rights and privileges, telling them in exact language what they are called upon to fight for. Nor can we underrate its value in strengthening our hands generally in our struggle for the achievement of Swaraj.

To frame a constitution for a people consisting of 320 million souls, professing different religious and speaking different languages, will be the most unique and gigantic experiment in democracy ever attempted. The task of the framers will be

further complicated by the presence of Indian States exercising sovereign rights in their territories. Whatever be the final form of the constitution one thing may be said with some degree of certainty, that it will have to be on federal lines providing for a United States of India with existing Indian States as autonomous units of the Federation taking their proper share in the defence of the country, in the regulation of the nation's foreign affairs and other joint and common interests.

As soon as the Draft Constitution is ready the Congress should take steps to call a National Convention consisting of representatives of all interests, communities and political parties to consider it and give it a final shape.

The Detenues

The greatest misfortune that can befall a people is to lose its independence. Patriotism, universally accepted as one of the highest forms of virtue in a free people, is condemned as a vile crime in a subject race. There are very few in the ranks of our public workers who have not, at one time or another, paid the penalty of patriotic sentiments by being consigned to prison as ordinary felons. It is not possible to give the exact number of the victims of lawlessness perpetrated in the name of peace and order, but taking into account only those sentenced in the Komagata Maru Case, the Martial Law prisoners in the Punjab where boys of 10 and 11 years were condemned to transportation for life for "waging war against the King, those incarcerated during the days of Non-cooperation, the Sikhs imprisoned in connection with the Akali Movement, and the large number of Moplahs punished and deported in 1922, the total swells to the staggering figure of 60,000. These 60,000, however, had the semblance of a trial in Ordinary Courts, Special Tribunals or the Martial Law Courts.

The most tragic case is that of the hundreds of unfortunate young men who, for no other crime than the love they bore for their country, have been condemned to a lingering death in the prime of their life, without even the mockery of a trial or the framing of a charge, under the provisions of that relic of legal

antiquity, Regulation III of 1818, or that cruel weapon of coercion and repression forged in 1924, the Bengal Ordinance, subsequently put on the Statute Book under the dignified appellation of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1926. The story of the detenues of Bengal reads like a page from the history of the Middle Ages, with this difference that while in the Middle Ages the moral consciousness of the world was not so well developed and the standard of civilisation was not so high, the tragedy of Bengal is being enacted in the twentieth century when the sense of justice and moral standards of right and wrong are several centuries in advance of medievalism and by people who claim to be the torch-bearers of civilisation.

It is the most damning confession of moral bankruptcy when the Government have not got the courage to bring these young men before their own law courts to be tried by their own judges and in accordance with the laws promulgated by themselves. I warn the Government against the consequences of the bitter conclusions such cruel persecution is burning into the very soul of the nation. Other governments have tried repression to crush the spirit of freedom, and for the result one has only to point to Russia and Ireland. Even the most credulous among us would find it difficult to have any faith in the genuineness of the professed intention of Government with regard to the future of India and the high-sounding principles enunciated in that connection, when elementary rights of citizenship and liberty of person are so flagrantly violated every day. Restoration to liberty of these young men would be some indication of the advent of a better spirit in the regulation of the relation between India and Great Britain. Our efforts should not be confined merely to the release of these unhappy detenus but a repetition of a similar outrage on the inviolable rights of citizenship in the future should be made impossible by incorporating in the fundamental laws of the country a Declaration of Rights guaranteeing to every citizen liberty of person, liberty of speech, liberty of association and liberty of conscience.

Closely associated with the question of the detenues is the

question of Indian nationalists compelled to live in exile in foreign lands. We may disagree with their methods of work in the past but the normal conditions which impelled them to adopt that course of action, have disappeared and there is no longer any reason why they should be denied the right to return to the country of their birth and to serve it peacefully.

It is not detenues and exiles alone who suffer. Ordinary citizens are being deprived of their freedom of movement and their right of ingress and egress is being tampered with through an ingenious administration of the regulations relating to the grant of passports. Passports have become one more weapon in the hands of the bureaucracy to be used against us. India has been turned into a vast internment camp and a number of Indians abroad have been successfully locked out. Respectable citizens have been prevented from leaving India even for purposes of health, business or travel. It will, perhaps, be difficult to find a more glaring example of the abuse of these regulations than in the cancellation of the passport of Mr. Shapurji Saklatwalla, M.P. considered worthy of the highest honour and position of trust in England by the suffrage of English citizens, he has been declared unfit to enter the land of his birth. These disabilities must go and the fetters of the prison removed altogether.

India and Asia

The task before us, as I have already pointed out, is to put India on her feet. It goes without saying that we must primarily and mainly depend on our own resources and organisation to solve our problem but it will greatly facilitate our task if we cease to view our problems as purely local. We have long committed the blunder of looking at them in an exclusively Indian setting. It is time we studied them in their international aspect and took note of every factor in world politics which has a bearing on them. The chief defaulters in this respect have been our Hindu brethren. Perhaps their peculiar social system and the self-sufficiency of the country fostered an outlook of isolation. When the British appeared on the scene, they were not slow to take advantage of this spirit of isolation

and turn it into a segregation so full and complete as effectively to cut us off from the rest of the world. So thorough was the blockade that we were kept in utter ignorance of the condition even of our immediate neighbours. The only contact vouchsafed to us was through London and only to the extent that suited the convenience of Great Britain. We saw the world through British glasses.

The Musalman, no doubt, did, now and then, disturb the placid surface of Indian indifference to developments outside. But his interest in world politics being mainly religious the current of national thought flowed as before. Isolation and segregation are no longer possible. Science has annihilated distances and removed barriers. The world has come closer. Events in one part of the world have their immediate repercussion in the other. The interdependence of problems in the different countries of the world has changed the entire conception of national politics. We stand to lose considerably if, without diverting our attention from problems at home, we do not take a practical interest in happenings and developments outside. In the conflict between Europe and Asia, Asia has been worsted because Europe could take concerted action against her piecemeal and defeat her in detail. The only hope of success in our efforts to check the forces of European Imperialism and Capitalism lies in Eastern nations coming closer and taking a more intimate interest in the problems facing them.

Fortunately we are so placed that a part of our population has cultural affinity with countries in the west of Asia while another has similar relationship with the countries lying in the East of the continent. Our economic problems are also more or less similar. Common culture and common interest should, therefore, facilitate the consummation of the scheme of an Asiatic Federation adumbrated by that great patriot Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, whom nature had endowed with an imagination to which geographical barriers were no obstacles and a vision which encompassed all the races inhibiting Asia.

A hapyy beginning was made by the Congress in this direction by participating officially in the 'Congress against Imperialism' held at Brussels, and by becoming associated with the 'League against Imperialism.' A more important and practical step taken by the Congress was the proposal of sending a mission to give medical relief and assistance to the people of China in their present struggle. The mission could not go as the Government of India refused to grant passports. The fact that the Government had to shift their ground twice in search of an excuse for the refusal clearly shows that the underlying motive of their decision was other than what was officially expressed.

The plea that it would be a departure from an attitude of strict impartiality to allow a medical mission to go to the assistance of one or the other of the belligerents, is certainly novel. It would, perhaps, have been nearer the truth had it been stated that it would be a departure from an attitude of strict partiality. As a matter of fact, it is neutrals alone who can send medical aid to belligerents without let or hindrance. Indeed, this principle is the raison d'etre of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which have rendered help and assistance in the past. When advancing the plea the Government forgot that fifteen years ago they themselves had given passports to a similar mission sent to Turkey while Great Britain was neutral.

National Health

I have taxed your patience by dwelling at such length on the problems of communal harmony and the unity of political parties for they are of the utmost importance for our national well-being at the present moment. There is, however, another subject which deserves the most serious attention of all those who have the love of India at heart. It might be urged that the problem of National Health, strictly speaking, does not fall within the purview of a political organisation and it is probably for this reason that it has, so far, not received that attention at the hands of the Indian National Congress which it deserves. It has such an important bearing on some of the most vital questions connected with some of the most vital questions

connected with the future of our people as a self-governing nation that I think it is high time the Congress realised its importance in our national economy and directed its attention towards it.

It does not require any great powers of observation to notice that there is a general deterioration in our health which has become specially noticeable during the last fifty years. Without going into any elaborate details a mere comparison between the physique of a young man of the present generation and that of the young man of the past two generations will clearly establish the fact that there has been a steady decline. The men of the past two generations, perhaps less brainy, were comparatively more active, possessed greater powers of endurance, were more courageous and less susceptible to disease. The contrast becomes more naked when we compare our level of general health with that of any other country in the West. If we examine the causes of this deficiency they would resolve themselves into climatic, social, economic, educational and hygienic.

In a tropical climate, where the heat during the greater part of the year is intense, there is greater general relaxation and quicker exhaustion of the system; hence, for the same number of hours of work a man is more fatigued in the tropics than in temperate and colder regions and yet the working day is longer in India than in the West There being not enough rest or recreation the Indian worker has not much chance of recoupment while the drain on the system is kept up from day to day. This has a disastrous effect on the period of average life and on the standard of efficiency.

The evils of our peculiar social system are so well-known that it is not necessary for me to dilate upon them. Every worker in the social cause knows the havoc played by seclusion and segregation of our female population, early marriages and rules confining the choice of marriage to a limited circle. The rigidity of the social rules affecting our domestic life is so cramping that it dwarfs the physical and mental growth of

the family and has a particularly harmful influence on children. Nature is rlentless in its revenge. If we defy the accepted laws of Engenics our common stock is bound to suffer.

The general economic condition of the workers in the fields and factories, who between themselves constitute more than three-fourths of the total population of the country, is such that it is with difficulty that thev can keep body and soul together. They are over-worked and under-paid, ill-clothed and badly-housed. Their power of resistance to disease is so low that they fall easy victims to the ravages of epidemics. Cholera, plague, influenza, small-pox and malaria claim their heavy toll of millions year after year.

The growing evil of drink threatens further to undermine not only the public health of the country but our entire social structure. Forbidden by his religion to the Musalman and held pernicious by the Hindu, the evil of drink would not have spread so rapidly and extensively had the Government taken a sympathetic attitude towards those who were endeavouring to stop it. On the contrary obstacles were placed in the way of national workers who wished to eradicate the evil and hundreds of young men who peacefully picketed liquor shops were sent to jail to pay the penalty of their reforming zeal.

The arm of law used to "protect" the liberty of the citizen to intoxicate others and to get intoxicated himself, in order to compensate him for the denial of liberty in the political sphere. Well might India complain. "Some are born drunkards, others contract the habit, and some have drunkenness thrust upon them." The health of the nation may suffer, crime may increase, efficiency of the peasant and the labourer may decrease, their children may starve, but prohibition cannot be introduced as the deficiency in the budget must be balanced. Is it too much to expect the Government to meet the wishes of the people, at least in this matter, by finding other means to satisfy the requirements of a balanced budget?

The conditions obtaining among the middle and the lower middle classes cause no less anxiety. With limited income and

forced to maintain a higher standard of life in cities, where living is comparatively dearer, they suffer great hardship indeed. Their hand-to-mouth existence and consequent malnutrition, together with residenced in congested, unhealthy areas, makes them particularly susceptible to tuberculosis. The appalling figures of infant mortality and death during child birth, both in rural and urban areas, are matters of great concern and deserve our immediate attention.

These evils are aggravated by a lack of proper provision for health and hygiene. There is much room for improvement in our general standard of cleanliness both in relation to the person and the household. Houses should be built with better provisions for ventilation and light, and with satisfactory sanitary arrangements. Villages and towns should be planned with due regard to water supply, sanitation and conservancy arrangements. Stricter supervision of food stuffs and better control of markets in every town and village, however small, is another crying need of the country. Medical relief should be organised on a wider scale. By these methods alone can we bring under control all preventable diseases and eradicate them finally.

The question of public health and hygiene is intimately correlated with that of mass education. Unless the mass-mind is prepared by a process of suitable education, it can neither appreciate nor carry out the most elementary and essential reforms affecting the health and happiness of the masses. Our Municipalities and Local Boards, in spite of the many restrictions placed on their powers, can still do a great deal to arrest the decline in physique of the people, and raise the general level of the wealth of the nation.

I have so far discussed the question of national health in its relation to our disabilities but making every allowance for them I cannot but deeply regret the general apathy and neglect shown towards the all-important question of physical culture. Even well-to-do people, who have both leisure and means, do not take much interest in it. This apathy was perhaps an inevitable result of the complete disarming of the nation and depriving the youth of the country of opportunities of develop-

ing their talents for military leadership. People were forced to rely on others for the defence of their homes and hearths. A spirit of dependence settled down on the nation. Old *Akharas* and gymnasia disappeared and with them the spirit of self-reliance, the very essence of national self-respect. Government show a nervousness difficult to appreciate, whenever the question is mooted that this emasculating general disarming of the people be put to an end and Indians given a chance to prepare themselves for the defence of their country. The fear that carrying of arms is likely to disturb the general peace and tranquillity, is entirely baseless. There have been fewer breaches of the peace in Indian States where there is no Arms Act, than in British India where even sticks beyond regulation size may not be carried. Establishment of gymnasia and centres of physical culture, in fact, the entire question of national health, turns on Finance. Private efforts, howsoever well organised, cannot meet the needs of the situation. It is only by devoting a substantial portion of public revenues that such reforms of a real nation building character can be taken in hand. Sixty per cent of the revenues of India is absorbed by the Military Department in the name of the defence of the country, but the Government ought to know that there can be no defence of the country when people are allowed to exist in such a state of utter physical degeneration. The defence of the country does not lie in building costly block-houses and erecting fortifications nor even in procuring expensive armament or the mechanisation of the Army. Money can make trenches, but men alone can man them. The real defence of the country lies in trackling the problem of manhood and improving the general health of the nation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to urge that the country should lose no time in preparing itself for the next move forward. I urge that all our energies and resources be concentrated on fighting the enemy residing inside our body politic, namely, communal and political discord. I beseech Hindus and Musalmans to accept the settlement of the Congress, which is just

and fair to both, and to sink their differences. I press for an immediate and countrywide reorganisation of the Congress, and cordially invite all communities and political parties to join the national organisation in a body in order to strengthen and make it truly representative and national. I appeal to all those who still desire to go to the Councils to close their ranks and form one People's Party of Opposition on the basis of the Congress Programme.

I strongly advise the Congress and the country to stand aside and have nothing whatever to do with the statutory Commission. I reiterate the demand of the Congress for a Round Table Conference of Indian and British representatives with plenipotentiary powers as the only method in which we could cooperate with Great Britain regarding the settlement of the future of India. I recommend the speedy preparation of the future Constitution of India and the calling of a National Convention for its adoption.

I suggest to my people that we should consider Indian problems in their international setting, and cultivate cultural relations and maintain friendly contact with Asiatic countries. I call upon my countrymen not to relax their efforts until they have secured the release of the detenues of Bengal and made repetition of a similar outrage on the elementary rights of citizenship impossible. I draw the attention of the country to the alarming condition of our National Health and earnestly appeal that effective measures be devised to check the causes which are leading to its steady deterioration. These, in my opinion, are the lines on which we can weld into a nation with an irresistible will and a determination to conquer all obstacles in the way of the realisation of its great ideal and occupy its proper place among the Nations of the World.

7

SWARAJ OR DOMINION STATUS*

Friends,

I am deeply grateful to you for the honour you have done me in electing me to preside for a secood time over this great national assembly. That honour, signal as it is, carries with it a burden which is none too light, and the bravest amongst us may well hesitate to shoulder it. You are well aware how I have hesitated. But the exceeding kindness with which you have repeated your confidence in me has left me no choice but to bow to your will and to endeavour to shoulder, as best as I can, the heavy burden of guiding a great nation in its struggle for freedom. That very kindness also emboldens me to expect from you every indulgence and cooperation in the high task with which you have entrusted me.

Nine years ago I had the honour to preside over the National Congress Martial Law with all its grim consequences and implications had just come and gone, and we were preparing for a great tussle with our alien rulers. That trial of strength came soon after and although we did not emerge victorious the honours of war were with us and the promise of future victory was ours. The great giant that is India, woke up for a while and the very awakening shook the foundations of British rule. There was a reaction and a relapse; but again we see unmistakable signs of another and a greater awakening, and who will stop India in her forward stride when she is fully awake? Non-cooperation followed Dyerism and O'Dwyerism. Something perilously like these is again in the air, and again we are on the threshold of another great struggle for freedom.

*Presidential address delivered by Pandit Motilal Nehru at the Calcutta Congress held on 29 December, 1928– 1 January, 1929.

In this struggle we shall unhappily miss many familiar faces, many trusty counsellors and gallant warriors who are no more. We shall miss Hakim Ajmal Khan and Lala Lajpat Rai whose death in the course of the year has deprived India in the moment of trial of two of her most trusted and valiant sons. Another ex-president who has passed away was Lord Sinha. Among other national workers who have gone I should like to mention especially Maganlal Gandhi, Gopabandhu Das and Andhraratna Gopal Krishnayya. On behalf of this Congress I offer its respectful condolence to the families of our departed colleagues.

I now proceed to place my views and suggestions before you on the immediate work before us. To prevent disappointment I must at the outset prepare you for a plain matter of fact statement of the world as it is, and not of the world as it should be. Let me warn you that you will be disappointed if you expect from me anything in the nature of high idealism presented in an attractive setting of word and phrase. Not that I deprecate idealism in the broader sense or am less convinced than anybody else of the supreme necessity of keeping the highest ideal in view, provided you try to live up to it. But pure idealism completely divorced from realities has no place in politics and is but a happy dream which must sooner or later end in a rude awakening. However high pitched the ideal may be, and the higher the better, the actual work to be done in the pursuit of that ideal must be guided solely by practical considerations.

I am sure that we are all agreed upon that ideal though we give it different names. I am equally sure that we are also agreed upon the only way to achieve it. But the tragedy of it all is that we have so magnified our differences on what to my mind are non-essentials that we are unable to see the wood for the trees. These differences lie at the root of our failures, and are responsible for conflicting schools of thought which have rendered common action impossible. In my humble judgment the whole trouble is traceable to varying tendencies in the different schools to over-rate some and

under-rate other aspects of the situation. For instance, there is one school of thought which exaggerates our weak points to such an extent as to feel utterly helpless in achieving anything except through the grace and goodwill of the very people who are oppressing and exploiting us. As against this there is the opposite school which takes little note either of our weak points or of the strength of the opposing forces and is ready to dash out full steam ahead on uncharted seas. It will be my humble endeavour to face the stern realities of the situation without blinking and then to suggest what seems to me to be the most suitable line of action for your acceptance.

It is, I take it, the duty of every man to help as far as it lies in his power to make his country fit to live in. But the actual process to be employed in bringing about the necessary change from what is to what should be, depends upon circumstances which cannot be the same in all countries and at all times. The essentials considered in the abstract are always the same, but concrete cases present peculiarities of their own to which no general rule or particular example is wholly applicable.

No two peoples in the world have started from exactly the same point or followed exactly the same course. Indeed the same people have had to change their course from time to time to suit the altered conditions of ever changing situations We can always profit by the failure of others but seldom, if ever, by their success. The reason is obvious, it is easy to avoid mistakes made by others if we find ourselves in the same or similar predicament in which those mistakes were committed, but it is impossible to bring into existence the potent factors which made for success in some other country if those factors are entirely lacking in our own. The practical problem before us is to find out how under the conditions in which we live and with the materials at our disposal we can deliver the goods at the lowest cost of production. False analogies from other countries can only help to confuse the real issue.

To form a true idea of the work before us we have to answer three questions :

(1) Where do we stand ?
(2) What is our destination ? and
(3) How can we reach our destination ?

I shall endeavour to answer these questions to the best of my ability more from the practical than the dialectical point of view.

We have first to make sure of where we stand so as not to lose our bearings after we start. The point has a two-fold aspect—one in relation to the Government and the other in relation to ourselves. As to the former we all know that whatever political or civil rights we possess they are in the nature of a conditional gift enjoyable during the pleasure of our rulers. They can deprive us, and indeed have from time to time actually deprived thousands of us, of those rights at any moment with or without reason at their sweet will by using the vast reserve of arbitrary power which they retain in their own hands. I will not encumber this address by repeating an oft told tale. It is well-known how the present Government has re-inforced and consolidated itself in the political and economic spheres by legislative, executive and administrative action. It will serve no useful purpose to take you through the long list of repressive and oppressive measures which have been taken in India from the begioning of British rule down to the present day, or to remind you of how, after we were thoroughly crippled, the door to recovery was completely barred against us. We have been persistently denied all "opportunity for self-realisation, self-development and self-fulfilment" for which Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das fought so valiantly in the closing years of his life. We have been scrupulously shut out of all effective parts in the internal and external affairs of our own country.

The solemn promises of responsible government have found fulfilment in that colossal fraud, the Statutory Commission, which is now careering along our streets leaving bleeding heads and broken bones behind. Nothing has so clearly brought out the cold callousness of the officials on the one hand, and the utter helplessmess of the people to protect themselves

on the other, as the progress of this Commission from town to town. To my mind the circumstances attending it are symptomatic of a grave organic infection and not merely of the well-known functional incapacity of the Government. It shows the presence of the toxin of Dyerism in their internal economy. The happenings at Lahore and Lucknow are only mild eruptions on the surface indicating the deep rooted disease within. We are indebted to the stupidity of the special correspondent of an English newspaper of Calcutta for a glimpse into the real mentality of the members of the Commission which may be taken as a faithful reflection of the mentality of the Government. He says :

> "The Kanpur scenes have apparently put the finishing touch on a psychic impression which the riotous scenes in Delhi had begun. Some of the commissioners are making no secret of their indignation that such things should be permitted. I feel that if some of the Commissioners had to write their report this week Lord Salisbury's famous prescription in another matter, twenty years of resolute government, would recommend itself much more to their minds than any advance whatever."

So that the only way to achieve responsible Government for India is to fawn upon the great Commissioners and flatter them with a false declaration of confidence. And the surest way to invite "twenty years of resolute government" is to show you true feelings about the government as a reward for servility and will welcome "resolute government" ; but whether it will last for twenty years and future along can decide. This prophet of evil has been dared to envisage the future. He proceeds to say:

> "I seemed to sense a vision of realities stark and grim, and catch from the future the tramp of marching men."

These remarks were called forth by the grand boycott demonstration which greeted the Commissioners on their arrival at Kanpur. It is remarkable that while this correspondent was sending his inspired vision, the Police Superintendent

of Kanpur was writing to the organisers thinking them for the excellence of their arrangements and the absense of any untoward incident. That letter has, I believe, been published in the press. But the editor excelled the correspondent as was befitting his superior position, by indulging in a particularly venomous attack, in the course of which he threatened resistance of the Indian demand for freedom to the "last ounce of ammunition." I am sure that if this editor and his correspondent had an ounce of discretion between them both, they would not have so easily given away official secrets. But we must thank them for their timely warning and assure them that we are ready. There can be nothing better than 'resolute government' at this juncture to bring matters to a head.

Our English friends affect to be shocked at these demonstrations. I should have ignored the foolish talk in which they have indulged but a responsible statement has recently been publicly made in this City on the subject by the Viceroy, and I feel that I cannot allow it to go unchallenged. However much one may regret untoward incidents, the right to hold peaceful demonstrations to give expression to strong public feeling has never been doubted. The demonstrations held after the return of the Commission to India have been characterised as "unmannerly and offensive." My answer is that such demonstrations must in their very nature be 'offensive' to those against whom they are made, and it is hardly reasonable to expect drawing room manners from a hostile crowd. The Viceroy has uttered two platitudes and a threat. The first platitude is: "However much those who organise such demonstrations may themselves deprecate violence, they are, when it comes to the point, often quite incapable of controlling the forces they have excited." The second is: "Those who deliberately embarked on a course so crude, so senseles and so dangerous, whatever the object they may mistakenly desire to serve, incur a very heavy responsibility."

The threat is that "it is the plain duty of Government to take whatever steps it deems necessary to prevent the recurrence of these discreditable incidents."

I agree with His Excellency on the first platitude and would also agree with him on the second if he could substitute the word "natural" for the words "crude and senseless." But both platitudes have no relation whatever to actual facts. As regards the threat it was anticipated by the English newspaper a week before; it indicated an early materialisation of 'resolute government.' I have already dealt with the latter and have nothing further to add. In regard to the former, I have to point out that it has been established to our entire satisfaction by public statements of responsible Indian leaders, which no amount of departmental enquiry can controvert, that all the violence at these demonstrations was started by the police, and attempts made by the people at one or two places to retaliate were speedily put down by their leaders. But if a stray missile struck a motor car, one of the occupants of which happened to be a lady, or some men in the large crowds came too near the great Commissioners and waved their black flags in close proximity to their highly respectable noses, is it a matter about which any undue fuss need be made? I am sure that under similar circumstances worse things would have happened in England. I should like to put a few questions to those who have affected righteous indignation at the happenings at Lahore, Lucknow and Kanpur. Those questions are:

(1) Would it be possible in any European country more specially in England for a commission of enquiry, which the people looked upon as a national insult, to travel in the comfort and safety enjoyed by Sir John Simon and his colleagues in India?

(2) Would not all the silken flags and gold embroidered decoration such as were displayed in Butler Park have been torn to shreds and all the beautiful multi-coloured electric lamps, shining on them, smashed to pieces, if any attempt were made in England to entertain publicly, men connected with a mission as highly unpopular among Englishmen as Sir John Simon and his colleagues are among Indians?

(3) How would any Englishman like his house to be broken

into, his guests treated to a sound thrashing and then arrested and imprisoned for a night for making a peaceful demonstration from his own terrace?

(4) How would an Englishman like to be imprisoned in his own house, for however short a time, for holding opinions against the Government of the day?

(5) How long would a government last in England which allowed the things mentioned in questions (3) and (4) to happen?

We know that the house of the great nationalist nobleman of Oudh, the Maharaja of Mahmudabad, was sorrounded with a cordon of police while his reactionary compeers were entertaining the Commission in a neighbouring park. The Maharaja, as is well-known, bravely stands for the boycott of the Commission and has refused to take part in any function given in its honour. Where is the liberty of the ordinary citizen when the premier baron of Oudh, a retired Home Member of the U.P. Government, decorated by it with the highest honours in its gift, can be imprisoned in his own house, simply because he holds an opinion disliked by the Government? In this anything very different from the "resolute government" foreshadowed by the Viceroy and the English newspaper. It has actually come upon us since.

The recent murder of a police official at Lahore has provided an excuse to those whose minds are already made up, to forge new weapons to destroy the forces of nationalism. It need hardly be said that the crime is to be regretted. Congressmen, whether belonging to the school of independence or that of dominion status, stand, and have always stood, for a policy of strict non-violence and have given practical proof of the sincerity of their convictions on numerous occasions, including the recent incidents at Lahore, Lucknow, Kanpur and Patna. It is at present impossible to say whether the Lahore murder had a political significance. But assuming that it had, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the real responsibility for sueh incidents lies on the shoulders of the Government. His-

tory teaches us that incidents like these are symptomatic of a condition which can only be dealt with effectively by a wise and radical change of policy, and not by resort to coercive methods which defeat their own purpose and are resisted by the people with all the strength of which they are capable. But the bureaucracy has little use for lessons of history. The orgy of repression has already begun in the punjab and is likely to extend at no distant date to the other provinces.

Forgive me for taking so much of your time over the Commission. It might well have been completely ignored, were not for the direct bearing it has on the work before us. It is a portent of evil, but not without the good which comes out of all evil. It has shown us the fine courage of our men. Specially the students, their serene coolness under the gravest provocation, their splendid stand against brutal *lathi* assaults with their own empty hands crossed on their chests, their gallant rescues of their comrades and leaders in utter disregard of the injuries inflicted on them. Let those who take this for cowardice try their "resolute government" and they will soon be disillusioned. They will have the satisfaction of shooting brave inoffensive men with their backs to the wall and chests bared to receive the bullet.

Let us now turn to the economic sphere. To have an adequate idea of the continuous exploitation to which we have been subjected, and of the enormous extent of the economic hold acquired by England over us by legislation and otherwise, it would be necessary to review the whole period of the British occupation of India. I shall however content myself by reminding you of a few historical facts the accuracy of which cannot be questioned. Besides maintaining the costliest civil and military services in the world at our expense, the solicitude of our trustees, as they delight to call themselves, has been mainly directed to the creation of markets in India for England's manufactures. This laudable object has been achieved by a number of direct and indirect methods too numerous to be dealt with satisfactorily in the course of this address. It is a long story beginning from the days of the well-known

barbarities committed on the Dacca artisans and continued through periods of more refined spoliation till we ccme to the present day powerful banking, commercial, and industrial combines which are now successfully choking off indigenous enterprise.

But by far the most important economic hold which the Government has acquired over the country by legislation and otherwise is through its manipulation of the currency. It will be tedious to go into the history of this highly technical question but the fact is now admitted that the present depression in Indian commerce and industry, and the low buying power of the cultivator are due to the action of the Government in forcing up the rupee from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. It has resulted in pinching the over-taxed cultivator of 12½ per cent in the price of the raw materials produced by him; and giving a bonus of 12½ per cent to the importer of foreign manufactures into India. If the Government had the interests of India at all in view, it would have reduced the land tax by 12% and imposed an import duty of 12% on all goods which can be manufactured in this country, including textile goods.

It was left to Sir George Godfrey of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to discover for the first time the other day that all the authentic records o India's prosperous trade and commerce before the advent of the British were pure legends. In the course of an utterance at the last meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce attacking everything Indian, he justified the British exploitation of India using fiction for fact. He said: "If Lancashire is accused of devastating India, Lancashire has equally devastated the English countryside." What a comparison! I presume Sir George Godfrey is in possession of some history of England unknown to the rest of the world which records the fact that the weavers of the English countryside were subjected to the pains and penalties that were inflicted, as proved by European witnesses, on Indian weavers by the East India Company, that the English countryside was compelled to buy Lancashire cloth in the place of homespun; and the further fact that a cotton excise duty was imposed on

Lancashire textile while foreign goods were imported free of duty.

His reference to Indian shipping betrays the same fondness for fiction as his reference to textile does—for facts I must refer you and him to the excellent literature that Mr. Haji has published on his harmless and timely bill. Indian shipping was as deliberately sacrificed for the English interest as was India's greatest cottage industry. Now that a belated bill is before the legislature seeking somewhat to stop the continuance of the grave wrong done to Indian shippers by the English monopoly, the monopolists accuse of attempting racial discrimination and pass a resolution demanding that the legislature shall not have the power to pass that bill.

Not content with distorting history this English merchant prince almost hit below the belt when he suggested that the framers of the draft constitution now before the country had sought to disfranchise Britishers. It was his duty before he brought so grave a charge against responsible men to make sure of his facts. He should have known that as soon as the Committee discovered that there was a possibility of doubt, they removed it in their supplementary report which was before the country days before Sir George Godfrey delivered his oration.

It will be clear from what said above that the process of forging new chains to keep us in perpetual bondage has gone on simultaneously with a long protracted, ruthless exploitation of our material resources While, however, the Government has to answer for great deal, it must be frankly confessed that we cannot honestly acquit ourselves of all blame for our present plight. The strength or weakness of a nation depends upon the strength or weakness of the tie which keeps its component parts together. In our case this tie has not for centuries been very strong and with the march of the new order of things has lost much of what binding force it ever had. There is no overlooking the fact that we are divided into a number of large and small communities, more or less disorganised and demoralised. The Government is undoubtedly responsible for the prevailing

ignorance and poverty among the masses and in a very large measure for the growing hostility among the classes. But it certainly is not to blame for the evils of our own social system, which has relegated millions of our people as good as ourselves, to the category of untouchables and depressed classes, and has put our women under restrictions which deprive them not only of many natural rights but also of the opportunity to render national service. Nor is the government solely accountable for all the communal differences which have contributed a dark chapter to the recent history of our own times.

The Committee of the All-Parties Conference has dealt fully its reports with the communal problem in India. It has offered a solution which I trust this Congress will accept. The problem before us, however, is a wider and more fundamental one than a mere adjustment of communal differences. It is: what place, if any, religion, as practised and understood today, should occupy in our public life?

Whatever the higher conception of religion may be, it has in our day-to-day life come to signify bigotry and fanaticism, intolerance and narrow-mindedness, selfishness and the negation of many of the qualities which go to build a healthy society. Its chief inspiration is hatred of him who does not profess it, and in its holy name more crimes have been committed than for any professedly mundane object. Can any sane person consider the trivial and ridiculous causes of conflict between Hindu and Muslim, or between sect and sect and set and not wonder how any one with a grain of sense should be affected by them?

The aim of all education and progress is to develop the collective instinct in man; to teach him to cooperate with his neighbour; and to make him feel that his individual good depends on the good of society as a whole. Only thus can the selfish and individualistic instincts be suppressed and the energy of mankind be diverted from mutual competition to cooperation for the common good. Religion as practised to-day is, however the greatest separatist force. It puts artificial

barriers between man and man and prevents the development of healthy and cooperative national life. Not content with its reactionary influences on social matters, it has invaded the domain of politics and economics, and affects every aspect of our life. Its association with politics has been to the good of neither. Religion has been degraded and politics has sunk into the mire. Complete divorce of one from the other is the only remedy.

But this is not all. A strange fatality has been pursuing our political activities from a very early stage. We have never been entirely free from serious differences among those who have taken up the patriotic duty of liberating their country in right earnest and have not winced at any sacrifice in discharging it to the best of their ability. These differences have inevitably set back the hands of the clock and opened the door to disruptive forces. There have been serious splits among the leaders which have spread with lightening rapidity to the rank and file on almost every occasion when a forward move has been taken or even contemplated. We would do well to profit by the lesson of the past lest the inexorable fate which has been pursuing us for the last 20 years or more overtake us again. It is close upon our heels already in the garb of socialism and will devour both complete independence and dominion status if you let it approach nearer.

The brief outline I have given above will show that we stand at present in the thickest part of the wood. We suffer from two sets of serious disabilities---those imposed upon us by foreign rule and those of our own making. It is difficult to stand against the foreigner without offering him a united front. It is not easy to offer a united front while the foreigner is in our midst domineering over us.

The two seats of disabilities together form a vicious circle around us and we stand in the centre, heavily handicapped by one in trying to get rid of the other. We have to break through the vicious circle before we can hope to be out of the wood.

This is my answer to the question--"where do we stand?

The second question is: what is our destination?

My answer straight and simple is Freedom in substance, and not merely in form, by whatever name you call it. The Madras Congress has declared the goal as complete independence. The All-Parties Committee has recommended dominion status. I have explained my position more than once but with your permission I shall re-state it here as clearly as I can. To put it in a nutshell it comes to this: I am for complete independence—as complete as it can be—but I am not against full Dominion Status—as full as any dominion possesses it today—provided I get it before it loses all attraction. I am for severence of British connection as it subsists with us today but am not against it as it exists with the Dominions.

Let me explain. National freedom unrestricted and unqualified in the natural carving of the human soul. I do not believe that there is single Indian, be he or she a member of a party or group, or one completely detached from all parties and groups, who does not love freedom or will not love to have it. Differences arise only when the question is raised whether it is possible to have and to keep freedom; and it is then that we find opinion sharply divided. There are those who have the faith in them and in their countrymen to answer the question by an emphatic "yes"—and I may at once say that I am one of them. But there are also those who will shake their heads, some from conviction and others in doubt. Complete independence is the goal of the former, dominion status that of the latter.

I will not undertake a fruitless enquiry into the relation or want of relation between independence and dominion status. It does not matter to me whether theoretically they belong to the same or different stocks, or whether one is or is not the negation of the other. What matters to me is that dominion status involves every considerable measure of freedom bordering on complete independence and is any day preferable to complete dependence. I am therefore not against an exchange of our object dependence with whatever measure of freedom there is in full dominion status if such exchange is offered. But

I cannot make dominion status my goal as it has to come from another party over whom I have no control. The only way I can acquire such control is by working in right earnest for complete independence. I say 'in right earnest' because I know mere bluff will not take me far; it is only when complete independence is in sight that the party in power will be inclined to negotiate for something less. Empty bluff will not carry us to that stage. Solid work and ungrudging sacrifice alone will do it. When that work is done, and sacrifice made, the party having the whip hand will dictate. Whether it is to be dominion status or complete independence will depend upon whether the conditions then prevailing are similar to those of Ireland or to those of the United States of America at the time when each came into what she now has. Meanwhile, there is nothing before us but a protracted life-and-death struggle on the one side, and continued repression relieved by an occasional dose of undiluted oppression on the other. It follows therefore that whatever the ultimate goal, we must be prepared to traverse the same thorny path to reach it. If we are not so prepared, independence will ever be an idle dream and dominion status an ever receding will-of-the wisp.

I must here notice another part of the Viceroy's speech from which I have already quoted. He draws a dark picture of the damage that India is "likely to suffer at the hands of its false friends who would guide it towards the morass of independence." The description of 'independence' as a morass is rather original. It would be more correct to say that we have to cross a morass before we arrive at independence. But the morass surrounds us on all sides and we can arrive nowhere except by crossing it. That being so our friends who support the movement say: why not make for independence pure and unadulterated which depends upon your own effort, however long and arduous, instead of floundering in the direction of dominion status which depends upon the good will of Britain. They argue that it will be sheer waste of time, energy, and sacrifice first to struggle in the morass for dominion status and when you find your way barred then to bungle back to the starting point and plunge again into the same morass to struggle

for independence. From Lord Irwin's point of view this argument is unanswerable. From my point of view dominion status is passed on the way to independence, and if it is refused you have simply to press on to your destination which must always be independence. Lord Irwin's argument based on loyalty to the Crown can easily be overstressed. Loyalty is a fine thing, but the strain it can bear is not unlimited.

But it is obvious that independence does not mean walking out of the world. If you continue to live in it you must come across others who also live in the same world. It is neither necessary nor possible for the existence of an independent state in the present-day world conditions to cut off all political, economic, and social relations with other states. Indeed, the more independent you are the more necessary it will be to establish relations all round. When, therefore, we talk of the severence of the British connection we do not mean a cessation of all relations, but such appropriate change in existing relation as is necessary to transform a dependency into a free state. The extent of the change will depend upon the extent of freedom we achieve. If it is dominion status, the change, as it is now well understood, will be from a dependency to 'an autonomous nation, free and equal member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.' If, however, it is complete independence, India will stand out of the British Commonwealth of nations and the nature of the relations with Great Britain will be determined by treaty and mutual understanding. In either case, some connection with other nations including the British must subsist if we mean to take an active part in shaping our own future and that of the world.

Mahatma Gandhi presiding at the Belgaum Congress said :

"In my opinion, if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for Swaraj within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people."

This was four years ago. Much water has since flown under the bridges. We have striven and striven hard for Swrraj within the Empire but the British people have not so far shown any inclination to help us honestly to equality. All the indications have been to the contrary. Indeed, responsible British statesmen have repeatedly declared that full dominion status is yet a far cry. I therefore fully sympathise with those who have exhausted their patience and have now raised the cry of complete separation. But let us fully grasp the meaning of Mahatma Gandhi. I am sure he never meant that the moment we felt sure that Britain was not going to give us dominion status we were to declare for independence irrespective of our own readiness to enforce it. He was, to my mind, referring to time when we acquired what I have described as the whip hand. The time admittedly has not arrived.

In the same address Mahatmaji said :

"The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent states warring one against another but a Federation of friendly inter-dependent states. The consummation of that even may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India."

And then comes the pregnant passage which I earnestly commend to your very serious consideration. It runs thus :

"I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire would be that of an alliance and not of independence without alliance."

So far as Britain's formal declaration of her goal about India is concerned, it is complete equality within the Empire. The scheme prepared by the All-Parties Committee and adopted by the Conferences is, therefore, in full accord with Mahatmaji's views.

The truth is that we cannot get anything from England except by proving our strength. The way to acquire that strength is to organise ourselves and resources. Such organisation is as necessary for those who desire dominion status as it is for those who work for complete independence. That being so the obvious course is to work together up to the point the weaknest of us is ready to go. If he is not disillusioned by the time we reach that point, let us leave him there and forge ahead.

I must here ease the minds of those who fear that the moment dominion status is granted to us, we shall use it to throw off British connection altogether. In the speech from which I have already quoted Lord Irwin said :

"Those in Great Britain who sympathise most warmly with the ideal of India attaining at the earliest possible moment the status of any of the other great Dominions of the Crown, will find the ground cut from their feet if British opinion ever becomes convinced, as some apparently are now endeavouring to convince it, that so-called dominion status was only valued by India as a stepping stone to a complete severance of her connection with the British Commonwealth."

There is no foundation for this apprehension and there is no reason whatever why we should seek complete severance of British connection if we are put on terms of perfect equality with the Dominions. If we are not put on such terms it will not be dominion status; we will not take a colourable imitation. It must therefore be clearly understood that dominion status has to be offered and accepted with all its honour bound to respect and uphold. But as Mahatmaji has put it, we "would not hesitate to sever all connection if severance became necessary through Britain's own fault." It is conceivable that we may be driven to separation by the treatment accorded to us by Britain herself, and in that case we shall have precisely the same remedy as the dominions now have.

It will, I hope, now be clear why I say that I am for complete independence and at the same time not against dominion

status, if the latter comes without avoidable delay. It is impossible to say which of the parties will have the whip hand at the psychological moment. Great Britain has the whip hand today, and the psychological moment for her to offer, and for India to accept, full dominion status, has arrived. If Great Britain will not avail herself of the opportunity India will have the whip hand tomorrow, and then will come the psychological moment for her to wrest complete independence from Great Britain. No offer of dominion status will then be acceptable.

Objection is taken to the preparation of any scheme of government on dominion lines by us on the ground that it is for Britain, and not India to make the offer. It is pointed out that those who enjoy dominion status did not fight for it but achieved it in the course of their struggle for complete independence, the offer having come from Great Britain.

I am quite clear in my own mind that substantially the same process will have to be repeated in India if we are ever to have dominion status and as I have already pointed out, we cannot reasonably accept it unless complete independence is in sight. But I cannot understand why it is not open to us to offer terms to Great Britain, as much as it is open to her to offer terms to us. If the offer is honourable to those who make it as well as to those who accept it, it does not matter to me who is the proposer and who the acceptor. I do not believe that we have among the soldiers of independence a more fearless and selfless patriot and a greater fighter for the freedom of India than Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was. Let me recall to your minds the great speech he delivered at Faridpore in which he said that all he needed was a full and fair opportunity for self-realisation, self-development and self-fulfilment. He did not hesitate to make an offer of full cooperation to the bureaucracy if it would only afford that opportunity, show a real change of heart, and guarantees 'Swaraj in the fullest sense to come automatically in the near future." That offer was no sign of weakness. It was made in the full consciousness of strength. "If", he declared, "our offer of settlement should not meet with any response we must go on with our national work on the

lines which we have pursued for the last two years so that it may become impossible for the Government to carry on the administration of the country except by the exercise of its exceptional powers......and when the time comes we shall not hesitate to advise our countrymen not to pay taxes which are sought to be raised by the exercise of their exceptional powers."

Those were the words of a statesman, a political philosopher and a determined fighter for liberty a man who believed in the doctrine of self-reliance which he preached. It was not beneath his dignity to offer a settlement while he was preparing for a great fight. As a matter of fact, Britain has already made an offer of a kind in the most solemn manner she could, by embodying it in the preamble of the Government of India Act. It is true that this offer is utterly inadequate and wholly unacceptable. The proper course is to make a counter offer. This is what the All-Parties Committee had done.

A good deal has been said about developing sanctions. On this point I am content to quote Gandhiji. Commenting on the All-Parties Committee's Report he said in *Young India* :

"There is still much diplomatic work to be done. But more than the diplomatic work is that of forging the sanction. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru truly observed that whether it was Dominion Status or independence, a proper sanction would be necessary if the national demand was to be enforced. Bardoli has shown the way, if the sanction has to be non-violent. The Congress creed has non-violence as its integral part. There is no denying the fact that non-violence had receded in the background before Bardoli. But even as the Nehru Report has made a unanimous demand possible, Bardoli has brought back the vanishing faith in non violence. If, then we are sure of the sanction, we need not worry whether Swaraj is otherwise spelt Dominion Status or Independence. Dominion Status can easily become more than Independence, if we have sanction to back it. Independence can easily become a farce if it lacks sanction. What is in a name if we have the reality? A rose smells just

as sweet whether you know it by that name or any other. Let us therefore make up our minds as to whether it is to be non-violence or violence and let the rank and file work for the sanction in real earnest even as the diplomats must work at constitution-making."

I have now given my answer to the second question I formulated. It is :

Our destination is Freedom, the form and extent of which will depend upon the time, when, and the circumstances under which, it comes.

Meanwhile there is nothing for us but to do the work necessary for all forms and all degrees of freedom. That work is one and the same and I now proceed to consider it.

It must be remembered that the same Congress which declared complete independence as our goal, by another resolution invited all parties to confer with its Working Committee to devise a constitution for India based on common agreement. It was then as obvious as it is now that no party outside the Congress was prepared to set its goal as high as complete independence from the point of view of its own conception of politics. The Congress must, therefore, be taken to have embarked upon the enquiry with full knowledge of this fact. What then was the object of directing the Working Committee to call an All-Parties Conference or Convention if complete independence was not merely the goal but the next immediate step? It certainly was not for the mere fun of it. The importance of the Convention and the political value of its agreed conclusions are quite obvious and must have been so to the Congress when it passed the resolution. But the Congress could not, at the time have any clear conception as to what the next step would be after the All-Parties Convention came to decisions. That would depend upon the extent of agreement reached and the nature of the decisions arrived at which could not then be known.

The Working Committee has faithfully carried out the instructions of the Madras Congress and called the All-Parties Conferences. The remarkable success of these national gatherings, in their endeavour to find the highest common basis for a constitution for India, is well-known. Never before, in the history of our public movements, so many organisations—political, labour, religious, communal, and commercial—as took part in those gatherings have come together on one and the same platform. There can be no doubt that the credit of this great achievement--perhaps the greatest since the day of Non-cooperation—belongs to the Congress which conceived the idea, and more specially to Dr. Ansari, the President of the Congress who never spared himself in carrying it out. The resolutions of the National Convention will come up before you and it will be your solemn duty to discharge the obligation inherited from the Madras Congress to determine the next step. You have succeeded to the great assets left by the Congress--the goal of complete independence. You cannot shirk its liability. The future will depend largely on the manner in which you discharge that liability.

The recommendations of the main and the supplementary Reports of the Committee appointed by the All-Parties Conference are all based on the principle of the highest common agreement. That principle I earnestly commend to this Congress for its acceptance. The Congress is in itself an All-Parties Conference and it is its duty to deal with every question coming before it from the point of view of the greatest good of all the parties and the people of India. So far the Congress has been discharging this duty on its own initiative, taking upon itself the responsibility of determining what is good for the people and regulating its policy accordingly.

This is the first time in the history of the Congress that it invited the people of India through the various organisations representing them, to determine for themselves what is good for them. In doing so the Congress had acted on the principle of self-determination. Those invited have accepted the invitation of the Congress as they never did before—no, not even in the

palmy days of non-cooperation—when, with all the millions behind it, the Congress was not supported by many well-known organisations. There is not one organisation—political, social, religious, communal, commercial, industrial or labour—of any note or standing today which did not take part in the All-Parties Conferences and the National Convention or which, having so taken part, has not given up much that it valued for the sake of unity. It is an achievement of which any country in the world might well be proud. That achievement will now be presented to you. Will you accept it or spurn it? If you have any faith in your claim for self-determination, you have no right to spurn it even if you disagree.

The only question is, whether there is such a consensus of agreement on the scheme that it can be treated as self-determined I say there is. The only dissentients are a few communalists. As regards them, I must say frankly that I do not understand them and am unable to reconcile their claim for special communal advantages with their desire for complete independence. Some of these would reserve to a handful the right to arrest the whole course of the country's legislation. Others are prepared to go back even on joint electorates if a few additional seats are not given to them in the legislatures. Their dissent with a scheme of dominion status can hardly be taken seriously.

I have commented adversely on the speech of the Viceroy delivered in this city recently, but I think I owe it to His Excellency to express my appreciation of another part of the same speech which is germane to the point I am discussing. He said :

"There is no use pretending that the different classes, the different communities, the different races in India will not have different standards, but in such disagreement there is nothing unhealthy or unnatural. If interests clash it does not mean that one set of interests is to be swept away or that one community need smother its individuality to suit the whole. Each has its own good qualities, its own ideals

to pursue, its own rights to maintain but each should be capable of self-realisation in its own sphere and at the same time taking its own place in the whole scheme of National life."

I heartily endorse this sentiment but am not quite sure that His Excellency and I are not at cross purposes. I claim that the Report of All-Parties Committee allows ample scope to every community to pursue its own ideals and affords it ample opportunity for "self-realisation in its own sphere" and at the same time gives to each "its own place in the whole scheme of national life." I have however a shrewd suspicion that Lord Irwin does not mean the same thing. But let me proceed.

Apart from the principle of self-determination the only other criterion by which you can judge the All-Parties scheme is real and lasting good of the country. Spurn it, by all means if you honestly think that it is not for the real and lasting good of the country and only offers a temporary advantage, at the sacrifice of the ultimate goal. But do not spurn it, merely because it conflicts with theories and dogmas which have no relation to the living facts of the situation.

Neither the authors of the recommendations, nor the Conferences which have adopted them, have put them forward as a counsel of perfection. Speaking for myself and my colleagues on the Committee, I can say that there is not one of us who, left to himself, would have produced the identical report which, acting together we have considered it our duty to make. There are points on which our recommendations run counter to the settled convictions of every one of us, as for instance reservation of seats for minorities. We were, however, compelled to recommend such reservation by the exigencies of the situation.

The one question, therefore that this Congress has to answer is, whether these recommendations and resolutions, taken as a whole are so utterly outrageous, so thoroughly inconsistent, with the real and lasting good of the country, that it is its duty to reject them, in spite of the consensus of opinion

in the country behind them. If they are not, this Congress has no option but to accept them.

It will be observed that the recommendations are divisible under two main heads, general and communal. Both are so inter-related that you cannot accept the one and reject the other. We cannot overlook the Lucknow resolution, whereby all parties agreed that 'every one of them will stand by it (the Report) as a whole and will refuse to accept any single part of it without giving full force and effect to all other parts." There are communal and politico-communal organisations which favour dominion status and have not only joined the communal agreements as parties. but given up what they considered substantial rights for the sake of an agreed constitution. Many hundreds of public meetings have been held throughout the country. attended by people of all shades of opinion which have approved of the recommendations as a whole. It is impossible to say how many accepted the communal solution because of the draft constitutions for dominion status, and how many accepted the latter because of the former. We have to keep our faith with all. The course suggested is therefore not open to the Congress. It has either to accept both, the communal solution and the dominion status, recommended by the Conferences, without prejudice to its goal of complete independence, or to scrap the whole scheme.

The position, as I view it, is this. Here is a constitution agreed upon by the various parties, invited by the Congress to frame it. These parties know that the goal of the Congress is complete independence. They do not ask the Congress to change its goal, but present to it the result of their labours such as it is, and say that they are prepared to go thus far and no further at present. They offer their cooperation and demand that of Congress, to enable both to reach the point up to which they are prepared to go. After that point is reached they reserve liberty to themselves and to the Congress to consider the next step. Is the Congress going to refuse them this cooperation and this liberty? Is the Congress after bringing them together going to send them back to the wilderness

in isolated groups, each to shift for itself, and leave the Congress to wrangle over the respective merits of complete independence and dominion status to the end of time? If the Congress will do that, it will abdicate its proper function to guide the nation on its forward march. The occasion calls for skilful generalship, and not academic discussions which take nowhere. The nation is knocking at your door. You must open it wide—wide enough for every one to enter, or lose your rightful place of high command. My advice to you is to accept the offer. If you do so the way to your destination is clear.

Begin at the point at which the All-Parties conference have now arrived and push forward with them as far as they would go, then pause and take stock of your equipment, and finally throw the strength of your whole being into one great effort to reach the goal.

That is my answer to the question : how can we reach our destination?

The first, and the most obvious step is to set our own house in order. For this purpose, really all the parties under the banner of the Congress are prepared to march shoulder to shoulder with them to the farthest end of the common road. That will be the first part of the arduous journey. I suggest the following programme for it :

(1) Popularising the communal solution, agreed to at the All-Parties Conferences, in the country by intensive propaganda in the press and on the platform and organising village to village lecture.

(2) Organising similar propaganda in regard to resolutions of the Delhi Unity Conference and the Madras Congress, with such improvements as this Congress might make on communal matters, other than those dealt with by the Conferences.

(3) Work among the untouchtables and depressed classes.

(4) Organisation of labour, agricultural and industrial.

(5) Other village organisations.

(6) Popularising khaddar and boycott of foreign cloth.

(7) Campaign against social customs which retard social intercourse and national growth, more especially crusade against the Purdah and the other disabilities of women.

(8) Intensive campaign against the drink and opium curse.

(9) Publicity.

It will be observed that this is a predominantly social programme. I claim no orginality for any of its items and have merely selected them out of a long list which with the exception of the first item, has been before the Congress and the country for years past. I may, however, be pardoned when I say that we have so far not done much worth speaking in carrying out the constructive work. Commonplace as this progamme may appear, it is the only true foundation on which the hopes of the high priests of complete independence, as well as those of the votaries of dominion status, can be safely built. To the former I say, that the measure of their capacity, for the tremendous sacrifice that the first real step towards their goal will demand is the measure of their success in carrying out this seemingly unpretentious programme. To the latter I say, that the only chance there is of dominion status being ever offered to them lies in the complete fulfilment of this very programme.

Large sums of money and organised work throughout the country are necessary if we are to set about the business in right earnest. It is not merely the business of any particular organisation or individual, in the country who have the least desire to attain any measure of freedom. Among those who took part in the Convention there were the representatives of all interests in the country—there were the wealthy, the well-to-do, and the poor. Let the wealthy give of their abundance, the well-to-do of their savings, and the poor of their pittance. Let the Indian Princes, great and small, come forward with munificent donations, and give practical proof of the great

solicitude they profess for the general well being of their country. In the social part of the programme all can join including Government servants. But will the Government let them? This is the acid test of the honesty of the pious intentions and wishes expressed by British statesmen in England, and India. Let the Government, if it honestly means what it professes, publicly declare that the Indian Princes, the Indian commercial and Industrial magnates, the great zamindars, and Government servants, have full liberty to help the social work in every way possible. Let there be no secret instructions to the contrary in sealed covers or in cipher, circulated at the same time. Let the English Banks undertake that they will not turn away Indian commercial and industrial concerns from their door if they subscribe to this fund. Let these three things be done, and I shall see that enough money is forthcoming within a very short time for the full fruition of this programme.

But we Congressmen need not depend upon the pious wishes and intentions of the British bureaucracy and those who are interested in maintaining it in power. The real work has to be done by Congressmen with the help of the progressive parties in the country.

I shall now examine the various items of the programme in relation to Congressmen.

Items 1 and 2 need no explanation. It will be observed that I have confined these items so the communal part of the recommendations as to which there is, and should be, no difference of opinion among us. The vital importance of the work is obvious.

As to untouchability, a great deal has been said but very little work has been done. It should, in my opinion, be the duty of every Congressmen to help actively in this work to the best of his ability. Untouchability must be abolished altogether, so far as Congressmen are concerned, and no person who refuses to associate with untouchables as his equals should be permitted to belong to any Congress organisation. The All-India Spinners

Association is doing good work in both directions but it needs further support and its work should be supplemented by lectures on sanitation and formation of village and circle committees to promote cooperation among the villages.

No. 6 is the special province of the women of India and I call upon them to offer their services to the Congress.

The campaign against social customs which retard social intercourse and national growth is essential for the success of any programme but we have so far paid the least attention to it. The purdah and the other disabilities of women are a curse which we should wipe out without delay.

If woman is the better half of man, let us (men) assist them to do the better part of the work of national uplift. To get rid of Purdah and to re-organise domestic life, no money is wanted. Every individual can and should do his bit.

It is impossible to enter into further details in the course of this address and I would suggest that the All-India Congress Committee be empowered to divide itself into a number of sub-committees, each to be Presided over by a member of the Working Committee, and to be incharge of one or more of the above items. The actual work will be done by similar sub-committees of the provincial Committees who will look for instructions to the sub-committee of the All-India Congress Committee in charge. All other details will be left to the Working Committee.

This is the general programme for all parties to carry out. It is as necessary from their point of view as that of the Congress, and I have reason to believe that they will give their full support. If we all do this work honestly and intensively the goal should be within sight. But if we are unable to work out this programme to the full-measure expected, whether we retain the support of the other parties or not, for Congressmen non-violent non-cooperation is an obligation they dare not shirk unless there is a better aggressive programme before the

Congress. Sirdar Vallabhbhai Patel and Bardoli have shown us that absolutely peaceful direct action is possible and can be made successful. He has shown what patient work among villagers can do. In your name, I tender my congratulations to the Sirdar and his brave comrades-men as well as women.

We may not forget our countrymen overseas. Though the great work done by Mr. V.S. Sastri has eased the situation to a certain extent in South Africa the position required considerable watching. The problem in Kenya is growing more and more serious and threatens the very existence of the Indian settlers there who by the way, went there long before any European and enjoyed the happiest relations with the Africans. In Fiji and British Guiana too the pressure of British exploitation is telling upon our countrymen who have gone there, as much as upon the natives of the soil. But without forgetting them, the best aid we can render them is, in the words of Sir Pherozshah Mehta, to gain our freedom here.

I have only dealt with what I consider to be the real crux of the present situation and in doing so I have tried to discharge what I conceive to be my duty to the country at this juncture. My views may not be acceptable to all, specially to the younger men. I quite appreciate their impatience. We need both patience and impatience Patience with those who differ from us, impatience with ourselves. I have no quarrel with the ideals of the younger men nor with the practical work they have laid out for themselves. I hold with them that all exploitation must cease and all imperialism must go. But the way to do it is a long and dreary one. They know it and have themselves pointed it out. The work before the young and the old is one and the same. Only the mentality is different. Let the younger men by all means preserve their own mentality, but let them not, for the sake of the very motherland they seek to serve, divide the country into more factions and parties than there are already. To the older men I repeat the same advice. Let them both remember the words of wisdom uttered by Mahatma Gandhi and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das I have quoted above.

The massess want bread. They have no time to make experiments and no use for theories and dogmas imported from abroad.

I have done. You have been patient with me. My humble services for what they are worth are at your disposal. Let us sink our differences. Let us march forward shoulder to shoulder and victory is ours.

8

CALL FOR COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE*

For four-and-forty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this period it has somewhat slowly but surely awakened national consciousness from its long stupor and built up the national movement. If today we are gathered here at a crisis of our destiny, conscious of our strength as well as of our weakness, and looking with hope and apprehension to the future, it is well that we give first thought to those who spent their lives with little hope of reward so that those that follow them may have the joy of achievement. Many of the giants of old are not with us and we of a later day, standing on an eminence of their creation, may often decry their efforts. That is the way of the world. But none of you can forget them or the great work they did in laying the foundations of a free India And none of us can ever forget that glorious band of men and women who, without reckoning the consequences have laid down their young lives or spent their bright youth in suffering and torment in utter protest against a foreign domination. Many of their names even are not known to us. They laboured and suffered in silence without any expectation of public applause, and by their heart's blood they nursed the tender plant of India's freedom. While many of us temporised and compromised, they stood up and proclaimed a people's right to freedom and declared to the world that India, even in her degradation, had the spark of life in her, because she refused to submit to tyranny any serfdom. Brick by brick has our national movement been built up, and often on the prostrate bodies of her martyred sons has India advanced. The gaints of

*Presidential address delivered by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the Lahore Congress held on 29-31 December, 1929.

old may not be with us, but the courage of old is with us still, and India can yet produce martyrs like Jatin Das and Wizaya.*

his is the glorious legacy that we have inherited, and you wish to put me in charge of it. I know well that I occupy this honoured place by chance more than by your deliberate design. Your desire was to choose another—one who towers above all others in this present day world of ours—and there could have been no wiser choice. But fate and he conspired together and thrust me against your will and mine into this temble seat of responsibility. Should I express my gratitude to you for having placed me in this dilemma? But I am grateful indeed for your confidence in one who strangely lacks it himself.

You will discuss many vital national problems that face us today, and your decisions may change the course of Indian history. But you are not the only people that are faced with problems. The whole world today is one vast question mark, and every country and every people is in the melting pot. The age of faith, with the comfort and stability it brings, is past, there is questioning about everything, however permanent or sacred it might have appeared to our forefathers. Everywhere there is doubt and restlessness, and the foundations of the state and society are in process of transformation. Old established ideas of liberty, justice, property and even the family are being attacked, and the outcome hangs in the balance. We appear to be in a dissolving period of history, when the world is in labour and, out of her travail, will give birth to a new order.

No one can say what the future will bring, but we may assert with some confidence that Asia, and even India, will play a determining part in future world policy. The brief day of European domination is already approaching its end. Europe has ceased to be the centre of activity and interest. The future lies with America and Asia. Owing to false and incomplete history many of us have been led to think that Europe has

*Wizaya was a Buddhist monk of Burma who was imprisoned on a charge of sedition and who died in jail on 19 September, 1929 after a prolonged hunger strike.

always dominated over the rest of the world, and Asia has always let the legions of the West thunder past and has plunged in thought again. We have forgotten that for millennia the legions of Asia overran Europe and modern Europe itself largely consists of the descendants of these invaders from Asia. We have forgotten that it was India that finally broke the military power of Alexander. Thought has undoubtedly been the glory of Asia and specially of India, but in the field of action the record of Asia has been equally great. But none of us desires that the legions of Asia or Europe should overrun the continents again. We have all had enough of them.

India doday is a part of the world movement. Not only China, Turkey, Persia and Egypt, but also Russia and the countries of the West are taking part in this movement, and India cannot isolate herself from it. We have our own problems, difficult and intricate, and we cannot run away from them and take shelter in the wider problems that affect the world. But if we ignore the world, we do so at our peril. Civilization today, such as it is, is not the creation or the monopoly of one people or nation. It is a composite fabric to which all countries have contributed and then have adapted to suit their particular needs. And if India has a message to give to the world, as I hope she has, she has also to receive and learn much from the messages of other peoples.

When everything is changing it is well to remember the long course of Indian history. Few things in history are more amazing than the wonderful stability of the social structure in India which withstood the impact of numerous alien influences and thousands of years of change and conflict. It withstood them because it always sought to absorb them and tolerate them. Its aim was not to exterminate but to establish an equilibrium between different cultures. Aryans and non-Aryans settled down together recognising each other's right to their culture, and outsiders who came, like the Parsis, found a welcome and a place in the social order. With the coming of the Muslims the equilibrium was disturbed, but India sought to restore it, and largely succeeded. Unhappily for us, before we could adjust our

differences, the political structure broke down, the British came and we fell.

Great as was the success of India in evolving a stable society, she failed in a vital particular, and because she failed in this, she fell and remains fallen. No solution was found for the problem of equality. India deliberately ignored this and built up her social structure on inequality, and we have the tragic consequences of this policy—millions of our people who till yesterday were suppressed and had little opportunity for growth.

When Europe fought her wars of religion and Christians massacred each other in the name of their Saviour, India was tolerant, although, alas, there is little of this toleration today. Having attained some measure of religious liberty, Europe sought after political liberty and political and legal equality. Having attained these also, she finds that they mean very little without economic liberty and equality. And so today politics have ceased to have much meaning, and the most vital question is that of social and economic equality.

India also will have to find a solution to this problem, and until she does so her political and social structure cannot have stability. That solution need not necessarily follow the example of any other country. It must, if it has to endure, be based on the genius of her people and be an outcome of her thought and culture. And when it is found the unhappy differences between various communities, which trouble us today and keep back our freedom, will automatically disappear.

Indeed the real differences have already largely gone, but fear of each other and distrust and suspicion remain and sow seeds of discord. The problem before us is not one of removing differences. They can well remain side by side and enrich our many-sided culture. The problem is how to remove fear and suspicion, and, being intangible, they are hard to get at. An earnest attempt was made to do so last year by the All-Parties Committee, and much progress was made towards the goal. But we must admit with sorrow that success has not wholly crowned its efforts. Many of our Muslim and Sikh

friends have strenuously opposed the solutions suggested, and passions have been roused over mathematical figures and percentages. Logic and cold reason are poor weapons to fight fear and distrust. Only faith and generosity can overcome them. I can only hope that the leaders of the various communities will have this faith and generosity in ample measure. What shall we gain for ourselves or for our community if all of us are slaves in a slave country? And what can we lose if once we remove the shackles from India and can breath the air of freedom again? Do we want outsiders, who are not of us and who have kept us in bondage, to be the protectors of our little rights and privileges, when they deny us the very right to freedom? No majority can crush a determined minority, and no minority can be sufficiently protected by a little addition to its seats in legislatures. Let us remember that in the world today almost everywhere, a very small minority holds wealth and power and dominates over the great majority.

I have no love for bigotry and dogmatism in religion, and I am glad that they are weakening. Nor do I love communalism in any shape or form. I find it difficult to appreciate why political or economic rights should depend on the membership of a religious group or community. I can fully understand the right to freedom in religion and the right to one's culture, and in India specially, which has always acknowledged and granted these rights, it should be no difficult matter to ensure their continuance. We have only to find out some way whereby we may root out the fear and distrust that darken our horizon today. The politics of a subject race are largely based on fear and hatred; and we have been too long under subjection to get rid of them easily.

I was born a Hindu, but I do not know how far I am justified in calling myself one or in speaking on behalf of Hindus. But birth still counts in this country, and by right of birth I shall venture to submit to the leaders of the Hindus that it should be their privilege to take the lead in generosity. Generosity is not only good morals, but is often good politics and sound expediency. And it is inconceivable to me that in free India the Hindus can ever be powerless. So far as I am concerned I

would gladly ask our Muslim and Sikh friends to take what they will without protest or argument from me. I know that the time is coming soon when these labels and appellations will have little meaning and when our struggles will be on an economic basis. Meanwhile, it matters little what our mutual arrangements are, provided only that we do not build up barriers which will come in the way of future progress.

The time has, indeed, already come when the All-Parties Report has to be put aside and we march forward unfettered to our goal. You will remember the resolution of the last Congress which fixed a year of grace for the adoption of the All-Parties scheme. That year is nearly over, and the natural issue of that decision for this Congress is to declare in favour of independence and devise sanctions to achieve it.

That year has not brought Dominion Status or the All-Parties Constitution. It has brought instead suffering and greater repression of our national and labour movements and how many of our comrades are today forcibly kept away from us by the alien power! How many of them suffer exile in foreign countries and are refused facilities to return to their motherland! The army of occupation holds our country in its iron grip, and the whip of the master is ever ready to come down on the best of us who dare raise their hands. The answer to the Calcutta resolution has been clear and definite.

Recently there has been a seeming offer of peace. The Viceroy has stated on behalf of the Government that the leaders of Indian opinion will be invited to confer with the Government on the subject of India's future constitution. The Viceroy meant well and his language was the language of peace. But even a Viceroy's goodwill and courteous phrases are poor substitutes for the hard facts that confront us. We have sufficient experience of the devious ways of British diplomacy to beware of it. The offer that the British Government made was vague and there was no commitment or promise of performance. Only by the greatest stretch of imagination could it be interpreted as a possible response to the Calcutta resolution. Many leaders of

various political parties met together soon after and considered it. They gave it the most favourable interpretation, for they desired peace and were willing to go half way to meet it. But in courteous language they made it clear what the vital conditions for its acceptance were. Many of us who believed in independence and were convinced that the offer was only a device to lead us astray and create division in our ranks, suffered bitter anguish and were torn with doubt. Were we justified in precipitating a terrible national struggle with all its inevitable consequences of suffering for many when there was even an outside chance of honourable peace? With much searching of heart we signed that manifesto, and I know not today if we did right or wrong. Later came explanations, and amplifications in the British Parliament and elsewhere, and all doubt, if doubts there were, as removed as to the true significance of the offer. Even so your Working Committee chose to keep open the door of negotiation and left it to this Congress to take the final decision.

During the last few days there has been another discussion of this subject in the British House of Commons, and the Secretary of State for India has endeavoured to point out that successive governments have tried to prove, not only by words, but by deeds also, the sincerity of their faith in regard to India. We must recognize Mr. Wedgwood Benn's desire to do something for India and his anxiety to secure the goodwill of the Indian people. But his speech and the other speeches made in Parliament carry us no further. "Dominion Status in action," to which he has drawn attention, has been a snare for us, and has certainly not reduced the exploitation of India. The burdens on the Indian masses are even greater today because of this "Dominion Status in action" and the so-called constitutional reforms of ten years ago. High Commissioners in London, and representatives on the League of Nations, and the purchase of stores, and Indian governors and high officials are no parts of our demand. We want to put an end to the exploitation of India's poor and to get the reality of power and not merely the livery of office.

Mr. Wedgwood Benn has given us a record of the achievements of the past decade. He could have added to it by referring to Martial Law in the Punjab and the Jallianwala Bagh shooting and the repression and exploitation that have gone on continually during this period of "Dominion Status in action." He has given us some insight into what more of Dominion Status may mean for us. It will mean the shadow of authority to a handful of Indians, and more repression and exploitation of the masses.

What will this Congress do? The conditions for cooperation remain unfulfiilled. Can we cooperate so long as there is no guarantee that real freedom will come to us? Can we cooperate when our comrades lie in prison and repression continues? Can we cooperate until we are assured that real peace is sought after and not merely a tactical advantage over us? Peace cannot come at the point of the bayonet, and if we are to continue to be dominated over by an alien people, let us at least be no consenting parties to it.

If the Calcutta resolution holds, we have but one goal today, that of independence. Independence is not a happy word in the world today, for it means exclusiveness and isolation. Civilization has had enough of narrow nationalism and gropes towards a wider cooperation and interdependence. And if we use the word independence we do so in no sense hostile to the larger ideal. Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British imperialism. Having attained our freedom I have no doubt that India will welcome all attempts at world cooperation and federation, and will even agree to give up part of her own independence to a large group of which she is an equal member.

The British empire today is not such a group, and cannot be so long as it dominates over millions of peoples and holds large areas of the world's surface despite the will of their inhabitants. It cannot be a true commonwealth so long as imperialism is its basis and the exploitation of other races its chief means of sustenance. The British empire today is indeed gradually

undergoing a process of political dissolution. It is in a state of unstable equilibrium. The Union of South Africa is not a very happy member of the family, nor is the Irish Free State a willing one. Egypt drifts away. India could never be an equal member of the Commonwealth unless imperialism and all it implies is discarded. So long as this is not done India's position in the empire must be one of subservience, and her exploitation will continue. The embrace of the British empire is a dangerous thing. It cannot be life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that, it will be, what it has been in the past, the embrace of death.

There is talk of world peace and pacts have been signed by the nations of the world. But despite pacts armaments grow and beautiful language is the only homage that is paid to the goddess of peace. Peace can only come when the causes of war are removed. So long as there is the domination of one country over another, or the exploitation of one class by another there will always be attempts to subvert the existing order, and no stable equilibrium can endure. Out of imperialism and capitalism peace can never come. And it is because the British empire stands for these, and bases itself on the exploitation of the British empire stands for these, and bases itself on the exploitation of the masses, that we can find no willing place in it. No gain that may come to us is worth anything unless it helps in removing the griveous burdens on our masses. The weight of a great empire is heavy to carry and long our people have endured it. The backs are bent and down and their spirit has almost broken. How will they share in the commonwealth partnership if the burden of exploitation continues? Many of the problems we have to face are the problems of vested interests, mostly created or encouraged by the British Government. The interests of rulers of Indian states, of British officials and British capital and Indian capital and of the owners of big zamindaris are ever thrust before us, and they clamour for protection. The unhappy millions who really need protection are almost voiceless, and have few advocates. So long as the British empire continues in India, in whatever shape it may do so, it will strengthen these vested interests and create more.

And each one of them will be a fresh obstacle in our way. Of necessity the government has to rely on oppression, and the symbol of its rule is the secret service with its despicable and contemptible train of *agents provocat. urs,* informers and approvers.

We have had much controversy about independence and Dominion Status, and we have quarrelled about words. But the real thing is the conquest of power by whatever name it may be called. I do not think that any form of Dominion Status applicable to India, will give us real power. A test of this power would be the entire withdrawal of the alien army of occupation and economic control. Let us, therefore, concentrate on these and the rest will follow easily.

We stand, therefore, today for the fullest freedom of India. This Congress has not acknowledged and will not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to dictate to us in any way. To it we make no appeal. But we do appeal to the parliament and conscience of the world, and to them we shall declare, I hope, that India submits no longer to any foreign domination. Today or tomorrow we may not be strong enough to assert our will. We are very conscious of our weakness, and there is no boasting in us or pride of strength. But let no one, least of all England, mistake or underrate the meaning or strength of our resolve. Solemnly, with full knowledge of consequences, I hope, we shall take it and there will be no turning back. A great nation cannot be thwarted for long when once its mind is clear and resolved. If today we fail and tomorrow brings no success, the day after will follow and bring achievement.

We are weary of strife and hunger for peace and opportunity to work constructively for our country. Do we enjoy the breaking up of our homes and the sight of our brave young men going to prison or facing the halter? Does the worker like going on strike and losing even his pittance and starving? He does so by sheer compulsion when there is no other way for him. And we who take this perilous path of national strife do so because there is no other way to an honourable peace. But we long for peace, and the hand of fellowship will always be

stretched out to all who may care to grasp. But behind the hand will be a body which will not bend to injustice and a mind that will not surrender on any vital point.

With the struggle before us the time for determining our future constitution is not yet. For two years or more we have drawn up constitutions and finally the All-Parties Committee put a crown to these efforts by drawing up a scheme of its own which the Congress adopted for a year. The labour that went to the making of this scheme was not wasted, and India has profited by it But the year is past and we have to face new circumstances which require action rather than constitution-making You we cannot ignore the problems that beset us and that will make or mar our struggle and our future constitution. We have to aim at social adjustment and equilibrium, and to overcome the forces of disruption that have been the bane of India.

I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy. I recognise, however, that it may not be possible for a body constituted as is this National Congress, and in the present circumstances of the country, to adopt a full socialistic programme. But we must realise that the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over, and almost the only points in dispute are the pace and the methods of advance to its full realization. India will have to go that way, too, if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adapt the ideal to the genius of her race.

We have three major problems—the minorities, the Indian states, and labour and peasantry. I have dealt already with the question of minorities. I shall only repeat that we must give the fullest assurance by our words and deeds that their culture and traditions will be safe.

The Indian states, even for India, are the most curious relies of a bygone age. Many of their rulers apparently still believe in the divine right of kings—puppet kings though they be—and consider the state and all it contains to be their personal property, which they can squander at will. A few of them have a sense of responsibility and have endeavoured to serve their people, but many of them have hardly any redeeming feature. It is perhaps unjust to blame them, for they are but the products of a vicious system, and it is the system that will ultimately have to go. One of the rulers, Ganga Singh of Bikaner, has told us frankly that even in case of war between India and England he will stand for England and fight against his mother country. That is the measure of his patriotism. It is not surprising, then, that they claim, and their claim finds acceptance with the British Government, that they alone can represent their subjects at any conference, and no one even of their subjects may have any say. The Indian states cannot live apart from the rest of India, and their rulers must, unless they accept their inevitable limitations, go the way of others who thought like them. And the only people who have a right to determine the future of the states must be the people of those states, including the rulers. The Congress which claims self-determination cannot deny it to the people of the states. Meanwhile, the Congress is perfectly willing to confer with such rulers as are prepared to do so, and to devise means whereby the transition may not be too sudden. But in no event can the people of the states be ignored.

Our third major problem is the biggest of all. For India means the peasantry and labour, and to the extent that we raise them and satisfy their wants, will we succeed in our task. And the measure of the strength of our national movement will be the measure of their adherence to it. We can only gain t em to our side by our espousing their cause. which is really the country's cause. The Congress has often expressed its goodwill toward tnem, but beyond that it has not gone. The Congress, it is said, must hold the balance fairly between capital and labour and zamindar and tenant. But the balance has been and is terribly weighted on one side, and to maintain the *status quo* is

to maintain injustice and exploitation. The only way to right it is to do away with the domination of any one class over another. The All-India Congress Committee accepted this ideal of social and economic change in a resolution it passed some months ago in Bombay I hope the Congress will also set its seal on it, and will further draw up a programme of such changes as can be immediately put in operation.

In this programme perhaps the Congress as a whole cannot go very far today. But it must keep the ultimate ideal in view and work for it. The question is not one merely of wages and charity doled out by an employer or landlord. Paternalism in industry or in the land is but a form of charity with all its sting and its utter incapacity to root out the evil. The new theory of trusteeship, which some advocate, is equally barren. For trusteeship means that the power for good or evil remains with the self-appointed trustee, and he may exercise it as he will. The sole trusteeship that can be fair is the trusteeship of the nation and not of one individual or a group. Many Englishmen honestly consider themselves the trustees for India, and yet to what a condition have they reduced our country!

We have to decide for whose benefit industry must be run and the land produce food. Today the abundance that the land produces is not for the peasant or the labourer who work on it; and industry's chief function is supposed to be to produce millionaires. However golden the harvest and heavy the dividends, the mud huts and hovels and nakedness of our people testify to the glory of the British empire and of our present social system.

Our economic programme must, therefore, be based on a human outlook and must not sacrifice man to money. If an industry cannot be run without starving its workers, then the industry must close down. If the workers on the land have not enough to eat, then the intermediaries who deprive them of their full share must go. The least that every worker in field or factory is entitled to is a minimum wage which will enable him to live in moderate comfort and humane hours of labour which do not break his strength and spirit. The All-Parties Committee

accepted the principle and included it in their recommendations. I hope the Congress will also do so, and will in addition be prepared to accept its natural consequences. Further, that it will adopt the well-known demands of labour for a better life, and will give every assistance to it to organise itself and prepare itself for the day when it can control industry on a cooperative basis.

But industrial labour is only a small part of India, although it is rapidly becoming a force that cannot be ignored. It is the peasantry that cry loudly and piteously for relief, and our programme must deal with their present condition. Real relief can only come by a great change in the land laws and the basis of the present system of land tenure. We have among us many big landowners, and we welcome them. But they must realise that the ownership of large estates by individual , which is the outcome of a state resembling the old feudalism of Europe, is a rapidly disappearing phenomenon all over the world. Even in countries which are the strongholds of capitalism the large estates are being split up and given to the peasantry who work on them. In India also we have large areas where the system of peasant proprietorship prevails, and we shall extend this all over the country. I hope that in doing so we may have the cooperation of some at least of the big landowners.

It is not possible for this Congress at its annual session to draw up any detailed economic programme. It can only lay down some general principles and call upon the All-India Congress Committee to fill in the details of cooperation with the representatives of the Trad Union Congress and other organisations which are vitally interested in this matter. Indeed, I hope that the cooperation between this 'ongress and the Trade Union Congress will grow, and the two organisations will fight side by side in future struggles.

All these are pious hopes till we gain power, and the real problem, therefore, before us is the conquest of power. We shall not do so by subtle reasoning or argument or lawyers' quibbles, but by the forging of sanctions to enforce the nation's will. To that end this Congress must address itself.

The past year has been one of preparation for us, and we have made every effort to recorgnize and strengthen the Congress organization. The results have been considerable, and our organisation is in a better state today than at any time since the reaction which followed the noncooperation movement. But our weaknesses are many and are apparent enough. Mutual strife, even within Congress committees, is unhappily too common and election squabbles drain all our strength and energy. How can we fight a great fight if we cannot get over this ancient weakness of ours and rise above our petty selves? I earnestly hope that with a strong programme of action before the country our perspective will improve and we will not tolerate this barren and demoralizing strife.

What can this programme be? Our choice is limited, not by our own constitution, which we can change at our will, but by facts and circumstances Article I of our Constitution lays down that our methods must be legitimate and peaceful. Legitimate I hope they will always be, for we must not sully the great cause for which we stand by any deed that will bring dishonour to it and that we may ourselves regret later. Peaceful I should like them to be, for the methods of peace are more desirable and more enduring than those of violence. Violence too often brings reaction and demoralization in its train, and in our country specially it may lead to disruption It is perfectly true that organized violence rules the world today, and it may be that we could profit by its use. But we have not the material or the training for organised violence, and individual or sporadic violence is a confession of despair The great majority of us, I take it, judge the issue not on moral but on practical grounds, and if we reject the way of a violence, it is because it promises no substantial results. But if this Congress or the nation at any future time comes to the conclusion that methods of violence will rid us of slavery, then I have no doubt that it will adopt them. Violence is bad, but slavery is far worse. Let us also remember that the great apostle of non-violence has himself told us that it is better to fight than to refuse to fight out of cowardice

Any great movement for liberation today must necessarily be a mass movement, and mass movements must essentially be peaceful, except in times of organised revolt. Whether we have the non-cooperation of a decade ago or the modern industrial weapon of the general strike, the basis is peaceful organization and peaceful action. And if the principal movement is a peaceful one, contemporaneous attempts at sporadic violence can only distract attention and weaken it. It is not possible to carry on at one and the same time the two movements side by side We have to choose and strictly to abide by our choice. What the choice of this Congress is likely to be I have no doubt. It can only choose a peaceful mass movement.

Should we repeat the programme and tactics of the non-cooperation movement? Not necessarily, but the basic idea must remain. Programmes and tactics must be made to fit in with circumstances, and it is neither easy nor desirable for this Congress at this stage to determine them in detail. That should be the work of its executive, the All-India Congress Committee. But the principles have to be fixed.

The old programme was one of the three boycotts—councils, law courts, and schools—leading up to refusal of service in the army, of non-payment of taxes. When the national struggle is at its height, I fail to see how it will be possible for any person engaged in it to continue in the courts or the schools. But still I think that it will be unwise to declare a boycott of the courts and schools at this stage. The boycott of the legislative councils has led to much heated debate in the past, and this Congress itself has been rent in twain over it. We need not revive that controversy, for the circumstances today are entirely different. I feel that the step the Congress took some years ago to permit Congressmen to enter the councils was an inevitable step, and I am not prepared to say that some good has not resulted from it. But we have exhausted that good, and there is no middle course left today between boycott and full cooperation. All of us know the demoralisation that these sham legislatures have brought in our ranks and how many of our good men their committees and commissions lure away. Our workers are

limited in number, and we can have no mass movement unless they concentrate on it and turn their backs on the palatial council chambers of our legislatures. And if we declare for independence, how can we enter the councils and carry on our humdrum and profitless activities there? No programme or policy can be laid down for ever, nor can this Congress bind the country or even itself to pursue one line of action indefinitely. But today I would respectfully urge the Congress that the only policy in regard to the councils is a complete boycott of them. The All-India Congress recommended this course in July last, and the time has come to give effect to it.

Our programme must, therefore, be one of political and economic boycott. It is not possible for us, so long as we are not actually independent, and not even then completely, to boycott another country wholly or to sever all connection with it. But our endeavour must be to reduce all points of contact with the British Government and to rely on ourselves. We must also make it clear that India will not accept responsibility for all the debts that England has piled on her. The Gaya Congress of 1922 repudiated liability to pay these debts, and we must repeat this repudiation and stand by it. Such of India's public debt, as has been used for purposes beneficial to India, we are prepared to admit and pay back. But we wholly deny all liability to pay back the vast sums which have been raised so that India may be held in subjection and her burdens may be increased. In particular, the poverty-stricken people of India cannot agree to shoulder the burden of the war fought by England to extend her domain or consolidate her position in India. Nor can they accept the many concessions lavishly bestowed, without even paper compensation, on foreign exploiters.

This boycott will only be a means to an end. It will release energy and divert attention to the real struggle, which must take the shape of non-payment of taxes and, where possible, with the cooperation of the labour movement, general strikes. But non-payment of taxes must be well organised in specific areas, and for this purpose the Congress should authorise the All-India

Congress Committee to take the necessary action wherever and whenever it considers desirable.

I have not so far referred to the constructive programme of the Congress. This should certainly continue, but the experience of the last few years shows us that by itself it does not carry us swiftly enough. It prepares the groun l for future action, and ten years' silent work is bearing fruit today. In particular we shall, I hope, continue our boycott of foreign cloth and the boycott of British goods.

I have not referred so far to the Indians overseas and I do not propose to say much about them. This is not from any want of fellow-feeling with our brethren in East Africa or South Africa or Fiji or elsewhere, who are bravely struggling against great odds. But their fate will be decided in the plains of India, and the struggle we are launching into is as much for them as for ourselves.

For this struggle we want efficient machinery. Our Congress constitution and organisation have become too archaic and slow-moving, and are ill-suited to times of crisis. The time of great demonstrations is past. We want quiet and irresistible action now, and this can only be brought about by the strictest discipline in our ranks. The Congress will gain in strength, however small its actual membership may become, if it acts in a disciplined way. Small determined minorities have changed the fate of nations Mobs and crowds can do little. Freedom itself involves restraint and discipline, and each one of us will have to subordinate himself to the larger good.

The Congress represents no small minority in the country, and though many may be too weak to join it or to work for it, they look to it with hope and longing to bring them deliverance. Ever since the Calcutta resolution the country has waited with anxious expectation for this great day when this Congress meets. None of us can say what and when we can achieve. We cannot command success. But success often comes to those who dare and act, it seldom goes to the timid who are ever afraid of the

consequences. We play for high stake; and if we seek to achieve great things, it can only be through great dangers. Whether we succeed soon or late, none but ourselves can stop us from high endeavour and from writing a noble page in our country's long and splendid history.

We have conspiracy cases going on in various parts of the country. They are ever with us But the time has gone for secret conspiracy. We have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule and you, comrades, and all our countrymen and countrywomen are invited to join it. But the rewards that are in store for you are suffering and prison and, it may be, death. But you shall also have the satisfaction that you have done your little bit for India, the ancient but ever young, and have helped a little in the liberation of humanity from its present bondage.

Vande Mataram.

9

THE SUBSTANCE OF PURNA SWARAJ

Friends,

Let me commence my brief address with respectful condolences to Shrimati Sarup Rani Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, and the other members of the family on the loss they have sustained in Pandit Motilalji's death. I know that their sorrow has been greatly relieved by the knowledge that it is shared by a whole nation. Motilalji's help at this juncture was a necessity which we all and above all Gandhiji felt whilst the delicate negotiations in Delhi were going on.

This loss came upon the nation when the tears had hardly dried over the death of Mohamed Ali. Though unfortunately the late Maulana had differences with us, his services to the country as a great patriot and brave man who never concealed what he believed, could never be forgotten. I tender my respectful condolences to the Begum Saheba, Maulana Shaukat Ali and the whole family. And in this connection I would couple those nameless heroes who unknown to fame, and never for it, laid down their lives in the non-violent struggle during the past twelve months. May their souls rest in peace and may their lives chasten us and spur us to greater sacrifice and greater effort for the cause for which they died.

The execution of young Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru has filled the country with deep resentment. I connot identify myself with their methods. I have no doubt that political murder is no less reprehensible than any other; but the

Presidential address delivered by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the Karachi Congress held on 29-31 March, 1931.

patriotism, the during and the sacrifice of Bhagat Singh and his comrades command my admiration. The heartless and foreign nature of the government was never more strikingly demonstrated than in their carrying out the executions in the teeth of the all but universal demand for the commutation of the death sentence.

Let us not however be deterred from our purpose in a fit of resentment. This insolent exhibition of their armed power but adds to the heavy indictment against the soulless system and increases our capacity for vindicating our position if we would refuse to be deflected from the strait and narrow path we have chosen. May the souls of the brave patriots rest in peace and may their families find comfort in the fact that the nation is a sharer in their mourning.

You have called a simple farmer to the highest office to which any Indian can aspire. I am conscious that your choice of me as first servant is not so much for what little I might have done, but it is the recognition of the amazing sacrifice made by Gujarat. Out of your generosity you have singled out Gujarat for the honour. But in truth every province did its utmost during the year of the greatest national awakening that we have known in modern times And thanks be to God that the awakening was a call to self-purification.

Though there have been aberrations, it is a fact beyond challenge that India has given a singular proof to the world that mass non-violence is no longer the idle dream of a visionary or a mere human longing. It is a solid fact capable of infinite possibilities for a humanity which is groaning, for want of faith, beneath the weight of violence of which it has almost made a fetish.

The greatest proof that our movement was non-violent lies in the fact that the peasants falsified the fears of our worst sceptics. They were described as very difficult to organise for non-violent action and it is they who stood the test with a bravery and an endurance that was beyond all expectation.

Women and children too contributed their great share in the fight. They responded to the call by instinct and played a part which we are too near the event adequately to measure.

And I think it would not be at all wrong to give them the bulk of the credit for preservation of non-violence and consequent success of the movement. Looked at in the light of non-violence our struggle is a world struggle and it is a matter of great satisfaction that the nations of the earth, especially the United States of America have heartened us by their sympathy.

The recent settlement however renders it unnecessary to dwell at greater length upon this heroic period in the national life. Your Working Committee has entered into the Settlement in anticipation of your approval. You are now invited formally to endorse it. The Committee having accepted it as your accredited representatives, it is not, I take it, open to you to repudiate it; but it is open to you to pass a vote of no-confidence in the present executive and appoint better agents.

But whilst it is but meet that I should draw your attention to the constitutional position, I have no doubt whatsoever that you will endorse the settlement which I hold to be perfectly honourable for both the parties. Had we not accepted the settlement we should have put ourselves in the wrong and thereby undone the effect of the suffering of the past year. Indeed we had always claimed, as Satyagrahis must claim, to be ready and eager for peace. When therefore the way seemed to be open for peace, we took it.

In view of the clear demand on the part of the British Indian Delegation at the Round Table Conference for full responsibility, and in view of the British parties having accepted the position and in view of the appeal made to the Congress by the Premier, the Viceroy and many of our distinguished countrymen, the Working Committee thought that if an honourable truce could be arranged and if it was open to the Congress to press without any reservation for what it considered to be the best for the country, the Congress should, if invited, take part

in the Conference and attempt to reach an agreed solution of the constitutional issue. If we failed in the attempt and there was no way open but that of suffering, then it was a privilege of which no power on earth could deprive us.

Under the constitution clause of the Settlement it is open to us to press for Purna Swaraj, to ask for complete control over our defence forces, foreign affairs, finance, fiscal policy and the like. There would be safeguards or reservations, or as the late Pandit Motilal called them, adjustments, conceived in our own interest. When power passes from one to the other by agreement there are always safeguards in the interest of the party in need of reparation or help. The continued exploitation of India for close on two centuries renders it necessary for us to seek assistance in several respects from external sources. This we would gladly take from Britain if she is willing to give.

Thus we would need military skill and there is no reason why we may not receive English assistance in this direction. I have taken only one telling illustration out of others that may be suggested. The defence safeguard may therefore be the retention of British officers, or, as some would say, even privates; but we could never let our def nce be controlled by the British. We must have the full power to make mistakes. We may gratefully receive British advice; never dictation.

The fact is that the British army in India is an army of occupation. Defence is a misnomer. Frankly, the army is for defending British interests and British men and women against any internal uprising. I cannot recall a single instance in which the Indian army was required for the protection of India to fight a foreign power. True, there have been expeditions on the Frontier, wars with Afghanistan, British historians have taught us that there were wars more of aggression rather than of defence. We must not therefore be frightened by the bogey of foreign designs upon India. In my opinion if we need an army, we certainly do not need the octopus we are daily bleed-

ing to support. If the Congress has its way, the army will suffer immediate reduction to its desirable proportion.

Nor can we divide financial control with the British Government. The nation cannot grow to its full height if it has not exclusive control over its finance.

Again we have been taught to think that our civil administration will be inefficient and corrupt if we give the able assistance of highly paid British civilians. The administrative powers that the Congress has exhibited during recent years and the fact of its having on an ever-increasing scale drawn to its assistance some of the best young men and women either without pay or on a mere pittance should sufficiently dispose of the fear of corruption or inefficiency. It would be too great a strain upon our poor purse to have to pay by way of insurance against corruption a premium out of all proportion to the highest possible estimate of corruption that may ever take place. It will therefore be necessary, if India is to come to her own to demand a heavy reduction in the Civil Service expenditure and thus a consequent reduction in the emoluments of the Civil Service.

We have claimed that many of the charges laid upon India are wholly unjust. We have never suggested repudiation of a single obligation, but we have asked and must continue to ask, for an impartial investigation into the debits against us wherever we cannot agree.

There is no receding from the Lahore resolution of Complete Independence. This Independence does not mean, was not intended to mean, a churlish refusal to associate with Britain or any other power. Independence therefore does not preclude the possibility of equal partnership for mutual benefit and dissolvable at the will of either party. If India is to reach her independence through consultation and agreement, it is reasonable to suppose that there will be British association. I am aware there is a strong body of opinion in the country to the effect that before a partnership could possibly be conceived,

there must be a period of complete dissociation. I do not belong to that school. It is, as I think. a sign of weakness and of disbelief in human nature.

Federation is a fascinating idea. But it introduces new embarassments. Princes will not listen to severance. But if they will come in the true spirit it will be a great gain. Their association must not be to impede the progress of democracy. I hope, therefore, that they will not take up an uncompromising attitude that may be wholly inconsistent with the spirit of freedom. I wish they would without any pressure give us an earnest of their desire to march abreast to the time spirit.

Surely the fundamental rights of their subjects should be guaranteed as of the rest of the inhabitants of India. All the inhabitants of Federal India should enjoy some common elementary rights, there must be a common court to give relief from any encroachment upon them. Nor can it be too much to expect that the subjects of the states should be to an extent directly represented on the federal legislature.

As regards Burma, press censorship has rendered it impossible for us to know the true situation there. Whether Burma should be separate from India or should be part of a Free India is for the Burmese alone to decide. But it is our concern. indeed it is the world's concern, to see that all sides are heard. It is well-known that there is a unionist party in Burma. It is as much entitled to freedom of opinion as the separatists. If therefore the information given to the Congress that unionist opinion is strangled, be true, the injustice must be resisted. The proposition that there should be a referendum of Burmese opinion seems to be eminently reasonable.

But before all else comes the question of Hindu Muslim or rather communal unity. The position of the Congress was defined at Lahore. Let me recite the resolution here :

"In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India.

communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular and Muslims and other minorities in general had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal question proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution, can be acceptable to the Congress, that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned."

Therefore the Congress can be no party to any constitution which does not contain a solution of the communal question that is not designed to satisfy the respective parties. As a Hindu I would adopt my predecessor's formula and present the minorities with a swadeshi fountain pen and paper and let them write out their demands. And I should endorse them. I know that it is the quickest method. But it requires courage on the part of the Hindus. What we want is a heart unity, not patched up paper-unity that will break under the slightest strain. That unity can only come when the majority takes courage in both the hands and is prepared to change places with the minority.

This would be the highest wisdom. Whether the unity is reached that way or any other, it is becoming plainer day after day that it is useless to attend any conference unless that unity is achieved. The Conference can give us an agreement between the British and us, it can perhaps help us to come nearer to the Princes; but it can never enable us to achieve unity. That must be hammered into shape by ourselves. The Congress must leave no stone unturned to realise this much-desired end.

It must be clear to all of us that the Congress can be useful for attaining Purna Swaraj only to the extent that it has gained power. The past twelve months have undoubtedly given it a power which he, who runs, may see. But it is not enough and can be easily frittered away by hasty action or by pride. He is a spendthrift who lives on his capital. We must therefore add to our power. One way to do so is on our part to fulfil to the letter the conditions of the Settlement. The other is to

consolidate our gains. I therefore propose to devote a few lines to this part of our activity.

We have made much headway in the matter of the boycott of foreign cloth. It is a right as well as a duty. Without it, the impoverished millions of India must continue to starve. For if cheap foreign cloth continues to be dumped down in the villages of India, the Charkha cannot flourish. Foreign cloth must therefore be banished from the land. It is dear even if it could be obtained free. The millions who starve, do so not because there is not enough in the land, but because they have no work during the off session.

It is therefore want of easy employment in their own villages that leads to starvation. Incessant propaganda is necessary to rid the country of chronic unemployment which has become second nature with our peasantry. The best propaganda is to do sacrificial spinning ourselves and wear Khadi. The All-India Spinners' Association has done much valuable work. But it is for the Congress to create the spinning and the Khaddar atmosphere. This to my mind is the best and the most effective propaganda of Boycott.

It has been suggested that the argument against foreign cloth applies to indigenous mill cloth This is true to an extent. But our mills do not produce all the cloth we need. For years to come they may continue to supply the balance that may be required over and above hand-spun cloth. But even our mills may prove a hindrance, if they compete with Khaddar or resort to questionable devices to push their wares. Fortunately many mills are patriotically working in cooperation with the Congress and are beginning to appreciate the virtue of Khaddar in the interest of the toiling millions. But I can certainly say that if our mills unpatriotically hurt Khaddar instead of complimenting it, they must face an opposition somewhat similar to that against foreign cloth.

The foreign cloth merchants will do well to bear the Congress attitude in mind in this regard. Foreign cloth boycott is a

permanent thing not conceived as a political weapon but as an economic and social measure of permanent value for the welfare of the masses. These merchants, therefore, if they will look into the future and think of their country, will do well to give up their foreign cloth trade. Everything possible is being done to help them but some very big sacrifice, on their part is essential.

English, Japanese and other foreign merchants will, I hope, not misunderstand the Congress attitude. If they will help India they will deny themselves the Indian trade in foreign cloth. They have other markets and other enterprises.

This brings me to picketing. This has not been and cannot be given up. I give below the relevant clause of the Settlement.

"Picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law; and if and when any of these methods is employed in any place. the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended."

Picketing is a common law right. But you will observe that within the limits prescribed it is not only inoffensive but highly educative. Its function is gentle persuasion, never coercion or violent restraint on liberty. I use the adjective 'violent' advisedly. The restraining force of public opinion there always will be. It is healthy, elevating and conducive to the growth of liberty as distinguished from licence. Non-violent picketing is designed to create public opinion, an atmosphere which should become irresistible. This can best be carried on by women. I hope therefore that they will continue the marvellous work begun by them and earn the eternal gratitude of the nation and, what is more, the blessings of the starving millions.

In this connection let me say a few words regarding boycott of British goods. This idea is almost as old as the Congress. We know that after the advent of Gandhiji on the political platform, boycott of British goods was replaced by that of foreign—not only British-cloth. He interpreted it in terms of

economics and social uplift, whereas the boycott of the British goods as such is a political and punitive measure. This was effectively employed during the recent hurricane campaign.

Now that there is at least temporary peace, and we seek to reach our goal through consultation and conference, we must withdraw the political weapon. We cannot be sitting at the friendly conference table and outside making designs to hurt British interests. Whilst therefore, we must for the time-being withdraw British goods' boycott, we must intensify Swadeshi which is the birth-right of every nation.

Whatever we produce in our country we must encourage to the exclusion of foreign whether British or other. This is the condition of national growth. Thus we must encourage and carry on intensive propaganda on behalf of indigenous insurance companies, banking, shipping and the like. We may not belittle or neglect them on the ground of their inferiority or dearness. Only by wide use and helpful criticism may we make them cheaper and better.

There is much loose talk about equality of treatment. What is equality of treatment between the strong and the weak, between giant and dwarf, between elephant and ant! If Lord Inchcape with his fabulous wealth and resources claimed equal rights with Seth Narotam Morarji of lamented memory, it would be a travesty of equality. It will be time enough to talk of equality of treatment after Narotamdas's successors have made some little approach to Lord Inchcape's resources.

Equality of treatment in the case of hopeless unequals ought to mean raising the less favoured upto the level of the most favoured. Thus equality of treatment for suppressed classes on the part of the so-called superior classes means raising the former to the latter's level; the latter sacrificing their substance and stooping to conquer. In relation to the British we have hitherto occupied a position in some respects lower even than the suppressed classes. Protection of Indian industries and enterprise to the exclusion of British or foreign,

is a condition of our national existence even under a state of partnership. Protection within even the British Commonwealth is no new-fangled notion. It is in vogue in the Dominions to the extent necessary for their growth.

Just as boycott of foreign cloth is an economic necessity for the sake of the starving millions, boycott of intoxicating drink and drugs is necessity for the moral welfare of the nation. The idea of total Prohibition was born before its political effect was thought of. The Congress conceived it as a measure of self-purification. Even if the Government earmarked the revenue from this traffic for purely Prohibition purposes, our picketing of these shops would continue, no doubt subject to the same severe restrictions as in the case of foreign cloth.

I invite the Government during the transition stage to anticipate the verdict of the national legislature and merely tolerate picketings of the two things, foreign cloth and drugs but make, if they will, common cause with the nation. But whether they will or no, we cannot rest still so long as there is a yard of foreign cloth entering the country or a single liquor-shop corrupting our misguided countrymen.

One word regarding salt. The salt raid must stop. Defiance of salt laws for the sake of civil disobedience must stop. But the poor, living in the neighbourhood of salt areas, are free to make and sell salt within that neighbourhood. The Salt Tax is not gone, it is true. In view of the likelihood of the Congress participating in the Conference we may not press for the immediate repeal of the tax which is bound to come very soon. But the poorest on whose behalf the campaign was undertaken, are now virtually free from the tax I hope that no traders will seek to take an undue advantage of the relaxation.

The foregoing perhaps shows you how uninterested I am in many things that interest the intelligentsia. I am not interested in loaves and fishes, or legislative honours. The peasantry do not understand them, they are little affected by them. I believe that Gandhiji's eleven points mean the subs-

tance of Swaraj. That which does not satisfy them is no Swaraj Whilst I would respect the rights of landlords rajas, maharajas and others to the extent, that they do not hurt t e sweating millions, my interest lies in helping the downtrodden to rise from their state and be on a level with the tallest in he land.

Thank God the gospel of Truth and Non-Violence has given these an inkling of their dignity and the power they possess. Much still remains to be done. But let us make up our minds that we exist for them, not they for us. Let us shed our petty rivalries and jealousies, feuds and let everyone realise that the Congress represents and exists for the toiling millions and it will become an irresistible power working not for greed or power but for the sake of common humanity.

There is one part of the constructive programme which I have not dealt with already; that is the all important work of removing untouchability. It is no use tinkering with the problem. The recent heroic struggle on the part of the nation would have been more glorious if Hindus had purged Hinduism of this evil. But heroism or glory apart, no Swaraj would be worth having without this supreme act of self-purification, and even if Swaraj is won whilst this stain continues to blacken Hinduism, it would be as insecure as a Swaraj without a complete boycott of foreign cloth.

In conclusion I may not forget our brethren overseas. Their lot in South Africa, in East Africa and in the other parts of the world is still hanging in the balance. Deenabandhu Andrews is happily in South Africa helping our countrymen. Pandit Haridya Nath Kunzru has specialised in the Indian question in East Africa. The only consolation the Congress can give, is to assure them of its sympathy. They know that their lot must automatically improve to the extent that we approach our goal.

In your name I would appeal to the Governments concerned to treat with consideration the members of a nation which is bound at a very early date to enter upon her heritage and

which means ill to no nation on earth. We ask them to extend to our nationals the same treatment they would have us, when we are free, to extend to theirs. This is surely not asking too much.

I invite you to conduct your proceedings, over which you have asked me to preside, in a manner befitting the grave occasion at which we have met. Differences of opinion are bound to exist; but I trust that every one here will cooperate to make our deliberations dignified and conducive to the attainment of our goal.

10

INDICTMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS*

I offer my profound thanks for the honour of being called upon to preside over the deliberations of the Indian National Congress. That the honour has been conferred on me at a time when the country is placed in very abnormal circumstances, when our revered countryman, Mahatma Gandhi and a large number of India's patriotic sons and daughters are still undergoing imprisonment, makes my gratefulness for this singal mark of confidence in me all greater. I also fully realise the responsibility which has thus beed placed upon me. I pray that I may prove equal to it.

When I was entering Delhi to preside over the Congress last year, I was arrested and detained in jail until some time after the Congress had met and passed its resolution in spite of the efforts of the police to prevent it from doing so. This fact and the attitude of the Government towards the Congress as disclosed in recent official announcements, had prepared people to apprehend that I would not be allowed to attend the Congress this year also. This is no longer a matter of conjecture. While writing this note this morning I received the following letter from the Collector of Benares :

"Dear Pandit... ..The Bengal Government have advised the local Government that the Public Safety Act is in force in Bengal and that if you and other leaders proceed to Calcutta for the Congress sessions, you will not be allowed to attend it. I

*Extracts from the undelivered Presidential address of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya written for the Calcutta Congress held on 1 April, 1933.

am directed to communicate the above to you and I request that you will be so good as to pass on the warning to other leaders who may be in Benares at the present time".

I appreciate the action of the Bengal Government in sending me this warning in this courteous manner. I have informed them however that I see no justification for their decision that we should not be allowed to attend the Congress, and have told them by what train I intend to leave for Calcutta.

Last year the Government arrested a large number of people on their way to attend the Congress at Delhi. This year also I hear that the police are very active in preventing people from going to attend the Congress. The Police Commissioner of Calcutta has issued a press notification warning the public that whosoever harbours, receives or assembles in any houses or premises in his occupation or charge or under his control a person whom he knows to have been deputed to Calcutta as a delegate to the Indian National Congress, 1933, will render himself liable to prosecution under the Penal Code. He has also warned all landlords, that the Reception Committee of the said Congress has been declared an unlawful association and that any place which in the opinion of the Bengal Government is used for the purpose of the said unlawful association is liable to be notified and taken possession of by the police who may direct any person therein and take possession of the movable property found therein.

The Government have thus obviously done all they could severely to discourage and prevent the holding of the Congress at Calcutta.

Its present attitude is morally indefensible and politically unwise. It cannot be too strongly condemned. The Congress may well be described as the unofficial Parliament of India. It is the greatest and most active political organisation of the country. It has been in existence now for forty-seven years. It has a great record behind it. The most important constitutional and administrative reforms which have taken place in India

during the last half century have all been due to the work or pressure of the Congress. It has been the constant and fearless champion of the people's right for freedom and self-government. The forty-six volumes of its reports, the numerous reports of its provincial and District Conferences and the proceedings of the Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils all eloquently attest how the Congress has been fighting for often measure with only one object in view namely, the amelioration of the condition of the people and their national advancement in all important directions.

It has always pleaded for equal political rights and equal justice to all classes and sections of the people. During the last thirteen years, the most respected of Congressmen have repeatedly suffered imprisonment for the sake of the country's cause.

For all these reasons the people regard the Congress as their best friend and guide and are ever willing to listen to its advice, even when it involves a sacrifice of the personal interests.

Ever since the Montford proposals were published, the Congress has been pressing for the introduction of responsibility in the Central Government of India. Finding that the Government gave no sign of willingness to respond to the request the Congress declared in 1929 that if Government would not announce their willingness to grant British Dominion Status to India up to the end of the next year, the Congress would advise the country to declare itself for complete independence. The Viceroy did make a declaration on first November 1929, but that did not meet the requirements of the Congress and consequently on the first day of January, 1930 the Congress declared complete independence to be its goal.

On March 12, succeeding, Mahatma Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience Movement to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to concede to minimum national demand which he clearly defined. The Government adopted strong measures to suppress the movement. But it failed to do so. Then after nearly a year's resolute administration Lord Irwin's

Government considered it wise and just to make a truce with the Congress through Mr. Gandhi which is known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Pact was made with the approval of the British Government.

The Congress was then invited by the Prime Minister of England to send its representatives to the Round Table Conference because it was felt by the Government that without Congress the Conference could not be regarded as fully representative. The Congress made Gandhiji its sole representative and he attended the Conference as such. He returned to India anxious to cooperate with the Government in the further work of the Conference. But while the Conference was going on in London, the general election in England brought a large Conservative majority into Parliament and a strong Conservative became the Secretary of State for India.

"As the result of the election", in the words of Mr. Benthall who represented the Conference, "the policy had undoubtedly changed. The right wing of the new Government made up its mind to break up the Conference and to fight Congress. The Muslims who did not want Central responsibility were delighted. Government undoubtedly changed their policy and tried to get away with provincial autonomy with a promise of central reform". "We had made up our minds", continues Mr. Benthall, "before this that a fight with Congress was inevitable and we felt and said that the sooner it came the better."

But we made up our minds that for a crushing success we should have all possible friends on our side. The important thing to us seemed to be to carry the Hindu in the street represented by such people as Sapru, Jayakar. Patro and others. If we could not get them to fight Congress, we could at least ensure that they would not back Congress. We pressed upon Government that the one essential earnest of good faith which would satisfy these people was to undertake to bring in the Provincial and Central Constitution in one Act. So we joined with strange companions. Government saw the argument; and the Conference instead of breaking up in disorder with 100 per

cent of Hindu political India against us ended in promises of cooperation by 99 per cent of the Conference, including even such people as Malaviya, while Gandhi himself was disposed to join the Standing Committee.

This needs no comment. The subsequent pronouncements and actions of the Government culminating in the statement of January 4, 1932, have made it clear that even before the return home of Mahatma Gandhi, the Government had decided upon launching a strong, carefully planned, comprehensive attack on the Congress and had coolly concerted their plans for it. In the light of these facts it becomes easy to understand why the Viceroy refused to grant an interview to Mahatma Gandhi when he so earnestly sought it with a view to remove the differences which had arisen between the Government and the Congress in some provinces and to avert resort to civil disobedience. The Government did not give him that opportunity and had kept him interned since that time. The attack on the Congress was hurled like an avalanche. The most drastic ordinances were promulgated and extended to all parts of India.

It is estimated that nearly 120,000 persons including several thousand women and quite a number of children have been arrested and imprisoned during the last fifteen months.

It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Government that its quarrel with the Congress is due to the adoption of civil disobedience, by the Congress. I have shown above by quoting the letter of Mr. Benthall that the Conservative Party and the European community of Calcutta decided to fight the Congress, not because it had taken up the civil disobedience movement, but because it insisted upon a real transfer of power from British to Indian hands, in other words, upon having the substance of independence in the management of the country's affairs. It must be remembered that as Sir Samuel Hoare boastfully stated, the initiative this time has been with the Government. The Congress offered civil disobedience in defence of the rights of the people which were attacked by the Government by means of the ordinances passed under existing

laws. It has throughout the campaign been in the power of the Government to stop civil disobedience or by abandoning the policy of repression.

Under the English constitution, the British Parliament exercises sovereign power as a legislature, and in theory it has a right to make or unmake any laws whatever for Britishers. But as a gre t English writer (Dicey) has pointed out, the actual exercise of authority by any sovereign whatever, and notably by Parliament, is limitted on every side by the possibility of popular resistance.

Further on he says : "The external limit to the real power of a sovereign consists in the possibility or certainty that his subjects, or large numbers of them, will disobey or resist his laws". And still further : "A sovereign may wish to do many things which he either cannot do at all or can do only at great risk or serious resistance, and it is on many accounts worth observation that the exact point at which the external limitation begins to operate, that is, the point at which subjects will offer serious or insuperable resistance to the commands of a ruler whom they generally obey is never fixed with precision". Another great writer cited by Dicey has said : "If a legislature decided that all blue-eyed babies should be murdered, the preservation of blue-eyed babies would be illegal. But legislators must go mad before they could pass such a law and subjects be idiotic before they could submit to it". This limitation exists even under the most despotic monarchies.

It is indisputable therefore that if a legislature or a despot should promulgate a law which is obviously unjust or oppressive and attacks our elementary liberties, the people have the right to disobey such a law and to offer to it "serious and insuperable resistance". The right of disobedience or resistance is a most valuable constitutional weapon in the hands of a people, by the fear of which they can force legislators or despots to exercise their powers within the limits of reason and justice, and by which they can re-establish their natural rights and liberties when they have been attacked or invaded.

The greatest of our liberties is the liberty of opinion. It was said by Erskine that "other liberties are held under Government, but the liberty of opinion keeps governments themselves in due subjection to their duties. This has produced the martyrdom of truth in every age, and the world has been only purged from ignorance with the innocent blood of these who have enlightened it."

Notwithstanding all the assurance of equality of treatment in the days of the war, after the war was over, England has changed her attitude towards India. It has never yet agreed that India should exercise the right of self-determination to establish to which she contributed her lives and treasure. On the contrary, she has treated Indians during the last thirteen years as a race whose pace of progress towards self-government must be determined by the Parliament of England.

England has gone on preparing a constitution for the future Government of India with the help of some Indians of its own selection and liking. It has framed the constitution under the claim that it is the right and moral obligation of the British Parliament to determine to what extent and with what limitations and safeguards it will allow India to administer its own affairs. The White Paper is an ugly revelation of the attitude of British statesmen who dominate the English Parliament today towards India and her problems. It constitutes a deliberate affront to the patriotism and intelligence of India. Indeed it proposes to make the position of Indians worse than it is today.

It was idle to expect that a constitution born under the influence of the attitude which British statesmen entertain towards India could be one which could be acceptable to the Indian people. It is not surprising that the White Paper is being condemned all over the country. I hope that no self-respecting Indian who has a correct sense of his duty towards the motherland will take part in any further confabulations regarding the White Paper unless and until the British Government should change its present policy and should make up its

mind to treat Indians as equal fellowmen who are as much entitled to complete independence in the management of their own affairs as England herself is in regard to her own affairs.

I appeal to my countrymen to wake up to the reality of the situation. I take it that every Indian wants that we should have complete freedom for the management of our own affairs. The attainment of this freedom will become easier if we will unite and work with one mind and purpose to achieve it. I implore all Hindus and Musalmans, Sikhs, Christians and parsees and all other countrymen to sink all communal differences and to establish political unity among all sections of the people.

The Unity Conference which was hed at Allahabad has nearly brought about communal agreement. I earnestly hope that the Conference will soon resume its work and complete it to the satisfaction of all communities. Our national political aims are common to all parties and with the disillusionment which the White Paper has brought about, I have every reason why we should not be able to establish political unity in the country. If we succeed in doing so, the pressure of United India bound to induce the British Government to revise its attitude towards India and Indians and to invite them to exercise their right of self-determinations and to prepare a constitution which shall give India real independence to manage her own affairs.

In the midst of much darkness, I see a clear vision that the clouds which have long been hanging over our heads are lifting. Let every son and daughter do his or her duty to expedite the advent of the dawn of the day of freedom and happiness. Truth is on our side. Justice is with us. God will help us. We are sure to win. "Vande Mataram."

11

SWARAJ THROUGH NON-VIOLENCE*

Brothers & Sisters,

We are meeting after three years and a half of strenuous work and suffering. The country has had the misfortune of losing the guidance and mature judgment of a veteran worker like Dr. Annie Besant, whose life and work have been a source of inspiration to thousands. It has further had the misfortune of losing another veteran patriot in Sir Shankaran Nair and a valiant nationalist in Mr. Syed Hasan Imam, who 16 years ago, guided the deliberations of a special session of the Congress in this very city. The passing away of that uncompromising champion of our liberties, whether in or out of the Speaker's chair, Vithalbhai Patel leaves a gap, which will be well-nigh impossible to fill. To many of us, the premature death of Deshpriya Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta was a personal calamity. In Mr. A Rangaswamy Iyenger the country has lost not only a distinguished journalist but also a constitutional lawyer, whose knowledge was frequently requisitioned.

Let me also remind you of the one, who is behind prison bars and who represents more than any one else the flower of the youth of our country and whose ardent spirit is undaunted by national set-backs or domestic anxieties. To Jawaharlal Nehru, our heartiest greetings and sympathy. Our thought also must go to the sturdy fighter, Subhash Chandra Bose, now in a foreign land. Nor may we forget all those who, though unknown, have suffered or are still suffering for the sake of the country.

*Presidential address delivered by Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Bombay Congress held on 26-28 October, 1934.

To those servants of the nation, unknown and known, who have passed away we offer our homage.

You have called me to preside over the Congress at a very difficult and critical time. It will be natural on your part to expect me to carry on the national work till the next session of the Congress. I confess, I feel overwhelmed by the tremendous responsibility that the position carries with it. I would have been happy to be left alone to work in my own humble way in my corner of the country but the nation's call may not be disobeyed and I am here at your service. I am fully conscious of my limitations, and I have sense enough to know that this signal mark of confidence is not meant as a personal tribute, but is only a token of appreciation of the little contribution that my poor province has been able to make during the recent struggle and of the sympathy which it has been its good fortune to receive in such ample measure in its recent unprecedented calamity. It rests, however, with you to help me by your unstinted support and cooperation to carry on the difficult duties you have entrusted to me.

Coming as I do from a province which, during the last ten months or so, has been particularly selected as the victim of Nature's wrath, I desire to convey my heartfelt thanks to the country, which has shown practical sympathy with the people stricken by phenomenal earthquake followed by huge floods. The response, which has come from all quarters and from all classes of people, inhabiting this vast country and from Indians abroad and from foreigners show conclusively that if the disaster was unprecedented in its magnitude, the sympathy and fellow feeling it evoked was equally unparalleled. There have been disasters in the past, which though not so vast in extent, were still some of the greatest recorded in htstory and yet the country was never before roused to such a pitch of active sympathy.

As the national feeling has grown and pervaded the country at large the wail of people in a corner of Northern India, has resounded and re-echoed from one end to the other and drawn out not only cash but tears and personal service. As the

Bihar Central Relief Committee said in one of its early statements. "Out of the great tragedy that has overwhelmed Bihar and taken its heavy toll of death and destruction and sorrow some enduring good has come in the shape of a united nation joined together in common sorrow and common effort to overcome it having faith in each other and forgetting the petty differences that seemed so trivial in the face of a mighty disaster."

The Congress movement has passed through various phases during the last fifty years of its existence. One would feel tempted to take bird's-eye-view of its hope and aspirations, its weaknesses and failures, its successes and triumphs. But I would resist that temptation except insofar as its recent history may be necessary to elucidate the present and enable us to lay out a programme for the future.

It will be recalled that the last regular session of the Congress was held at Karachi in March 1931, soon after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It was much to be hoped that Pact would open a way to permanent peace between Britain and India but that was not to be. Now that Civil Disobedience has been suspended it would be useless to go into a detailed examination of the circumstances, which forced the hands of the Congress to restart Civil Disobedience after Mahatma Gandhi's return from the Second Round Table Conference. I would content myself by stating that at every step the object of the authors of the Pact was frustrated by the official who were in charge of affairs and had to give effect to its provisions

Lord Irwin had retired. Lord Willingdon had come in and there was undisguised resentment in official circles at what was regarded as a surrender on the part of Lord Irwin. And the moment he was away from the scene, a complete change in the Government policy came about and preparations were set afoot to take the Congress by surprise as soon as the Round Table Conference was over. It was known the Government could not afford and did not intend to accept the demands of the Con-

gress. Events in England also proved favourable to this scheme of thing. The Labour Government had resigned. The National Government with a big Conservative majority was formed and the whole policy of Lord Irwin and Mr. Wedgwood Benn was reversed.

When Mahatma Gandhi returned from England he found himself faced with a situation which seemed to have been very carefully and meticulously prepared. An excuse was found in what was wrongly described and advertised as a No-Rent Campaign in the U.P., but which was really nothing more than suspension of payment pending negotiations, which had been going on between the Government on the one side and the Congress leaders on the other, to secure a settlement on an equitable basis on the very serious question of remission or suspension of rent on pure economic grounds, which had become necessary on account of unprecedented economic depression.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Mr. Sherwani and Mr. Tandon were arrested just two days before Mahatma Gandhi's arrival and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan with some of his colleagues was made a prisoner under an old Regulation. Bengal had already been selected for special treatment and a number of most drastic Ordinances had been promulgated They were followed by equally drastic Ordinances for the United Provinces and the Frontier. On his voyage, Mahatma Gandhi had been issuing statements offering cooperation but on landing he came to know of the removal, by arrests and imprisonment of value colleagues and the promulgation of the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier, yet he offered on behalf of the Working Committee to intervene and. if possible to bring about a settlement and applied to the Viceroy for an interview which was unceremoniously rejected except under condition that the questions relating to Bengal, the U.P. and the Frontier would not be subjects of discussion.

The interview having been rejected, Mahatma Gandhi had no option but to advise the Working Committee to be prepared

for the revival of Civil Disobedience. But he made a last moment attempt and sent a second long telegram begging again for an unconditional interview failing which he thought it his duty to inform the Viceroy that the Working Committee would have to resort to Civil Disobedience. Reply came to this last moment request in the form of warrants of arrest for himself, the Congress President, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other prominent Congressmen throughout the country.

The Congress was taken unwares and the Government expected that they would be able to crash the whole movement within a fortnight. Inspite of want of preparation, inspite of sudden removal of all the prominent Congressmen throughout the country within a few days to prison, when they were not able to give instructions to their followers as to how to organise the campaign, it must be said to the credit of the nation that the lead which had been given by the Working Committee, was faithfully and spontaneously followed. Thousands again courted imprisonment, lathi charges, firings, heavy fines, confiscation of property and beatings on an extensive scale.

The movement was not crushed and went on for months and months without a break to the bewilderment of officials, who had hoped to crush it in a few days. Special sessions of the Congress were held at Delhi and at Calcutta amidst arrest and lathi charges and inspite of the vigilance of the police, who had concentrated upon preventing them. It is unnecessary to go into the details of this repression beyond stating that a bare summary of the provisions of the various ordinances most of which were later converted into acts by obliging legislatures, will show how drastic they were in character and comprehensive in scope.

The courts were ousted from jurisdiction and the executive armed with large power. The press was muzzled. New offences were created and in some cases collective and vicarious punishments laid down. To these must be added numerous laws enacted for Bengal particularly apparently to meet what is described as the terrorist manace but resulting not in a few cases in a

complete suspension of all political activities of a progressive type lest their sponsors should incur the wrath and the penalty of the all-powerful CID. Now the Congress has never concealed its view regarding the terrorist movement. It has condemned without hesitation and in an unequivocal language all terrorist outrages and under the great influence of Gandhiji has done all it could to create an atmosphere against the cult of terrorism.

But at every step it has felt hampered by the fact that impatient enthusiasts who take to this wrong method cannot effectively be approached by public opinion on account of the stiffness of the Government attitude and its all-prevading blasting suspicion of the motives of even those who are its supporters and helpers in this respect. Apart from other considerations the Congress condemns terrorism because it hampers the country's progress and tends to create forces which will lead to further disruption and trouble and because it is essentially wrong and un-Indian. But these men cannot be weaned from it by the indefensible method of unadulterated repression.

The country has been passing through a period of deep economic depression, which has been intensified by the Government policy of managing Indian affairs in the interests not of India but of Great Britain. The past few years have seen great distress of the peasantry unable to pay the heavy land revenue and rent and suffering great privations. They have witnessed curtailment of expenditure on nation-building departments, great slump in industry, export of more than 200 crores of distress gold, dislocation of trade, and a tremendous increase in unemployment the extent of which even in the best of normal years the British Government have never dared to ascertain owing to its vastness.

These years have been remarkable for heavy additions to the so-called Public Debt of India and the burdens of the already overtaxed tax-payer and the poverty-stricken population for carrying on an extravagant and top heavy administration and partly for suppressing and crushing the movement for freedom.

The Ottawa Pact which has been condemned with one voice by the best informed opinion in the country as being deterimental to the best interests of India and particularly of the masses of agriculturists was ratified. Its working has proved that the apprehensions of its critics were well founded It has successfully tied India to the chariot wheels of the British policy of Imperial preference.

Indians Abroad

The position of our countrymen abroad gives no ground for satisfaction. Their treatment in the colonies of the British Empire has been a long standing cause of just grievance and has influenced not a little the change in our outlook and opinion in favour of complete independence One after another, Indians settled in these colonies and protectorates are being deprived of their inherent rights to which they are entitled by virtue of their long association, service and contribution to the prosperity of these colonies. They have, in fact, been instrumental in many cases in building up these colonies and many have been born in them and have their homes without any other in the world.

One scheme after another is devised to get rid of them after they are no more needed, and although it is some consolation to know that the scheme of assisted repatriation has been given up, it is also to be noted that no place is found in the vast British Empire where they can live and settle with the same full right to land and citizenship as others have in India. The latest application of this policy of squeezing out Indians is reported from Zanzibar where inspite of the best relations which Indians have maintained for generations with the Sultan and his subjects ordinances have been hurriedly passed which deprive them of the rights of acquiring land. The discrimination against Indians becomes flagrant when we know that this restriction does not extend to the new arrivals from Arabia.

There is nothing surprising in all this when we know that Indians do not enjoy even elementary rights of citizenship in

their own country and which even the proposed constitutional reforms are not going to confer on them. We can only give this assurance to our countrymen abroad that as our position at home improves their position will automatically improve. In this connection it is impossible not to mention with gratitude the great name of Dinbandhu CF Andrews who has been frequently going to Africa to render such help as has been possible for him to render.

The Dual Policy

The Government policy which was enunciated by Lord Irwin towards the end of 1929 announcing the convention of the Round Table Conference had always had a double aspect which has been emphasised more than once by Lord Willingdon's Government. It has been claimed by the Government that this double policy, on the one hand, aimsat advancing constitutional reforms and on the other seeks to suppress what the Government considers to be subversive and revolutionary movements.

In pursuance of the first, it is claimed that the Round Table Conference has been convened and proposals have been framed as a result of consultation with Indians and that a Joint Parliamentary Committee is considering them. These proposals are known as the White Paper. In pursuance of the second, the Government has thought it necessary to suppress the Civil Disobedience movement with a heavy hand. To Indians it seems that the second policy has not only been much more in evidence and has caused untold suffering to numberless people, but is responsible for the issuing of ordinances and the enactment of laws which have taken away even the ordinary rights of citizenship and laid down drastic penalties and suppressed not only what may be regarded as subversive movements, but effectively prevented perfectly constitutional agitation also.

The reform side of the policy has succeeded only in feeding credulous people on hopes of something which may not

come. We have, undoubtedly, had three Round Table Conferences, Committees and Sub-Committees *ad infinitun* and prolonged inquiry by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. It has dragged on in some form or other its interminable investigations for six or seven long years. It is yet to be seen if this long labour is going to produce anything acceptable even to the most moderate opinion in the country.

The White Paper

The White Paper has been condemned by almost unanimous public opinion in India as highly disappointing and unsatisfactory. And, of course, it does not in any way fulfil the requirements of the Congress, which has declared for independence meaning and including complete control over the Army, the finances, the foreign relations and the internal administration of the country. The White Paper is nothing if it is not a negation of all these items and if it does not bar even a gradual progress towards any of them. In view of the fact that very serious efforts are being made in England to whittle down even the White Paper proposals and that even Mr. Arthur Henderson, the leader of the Labour Party, is unable to concede anything in the nature of even diluted self-determination to India, it may seem out of place for me to devote any time to its detailed criticism.

But inasmuch as the White Paper proposals are the result of long and expensive consultations and are under-going detailed examination by the Joint Parliamentary Committee and have been put forward in justification of Government policy of advancing constitutional reforms, I take leave to point out that the proposals of the White Paper do not take us any where near what our moderate countrymen aim at viz , Dominion Status, not to speak of complete independence which is the Congress goal. In fact, they take the country in some respects in the opposite direction and leave it in a position constitutionally worse than that now occupied under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

I will judge the White Paper proposals in the light of four

tests, namely (1) how far the proposed new legislatures will be representative of the nation; (2) how far the powers alleged to be transferred to popular control are real in the centre and the Provinces; (3) what the Powers proposed to be transferred in regard to the finance are, and what additional burdens India will have to bear for the new constitution, and (4) whether the proposed constitution contains within itself any elements of growth and development.

I. Composition of the Federal Legislature

It is sought to replace the block of officials and non-officials nominated by the Government by nominees of Indian States, joining the Federation. The nominated officials and non-officials of British India cannot be said to be amenable to popular opinion but they have certainly a wider outlook and are more in contact with public opinion than any nominee of a State could be. They also feel a sense of responsibility even though it is to the British Government and not to the people of India. Will the State nominees have any information about or acquaintance with events happening in British India from which the States have been in a way kept segregated ?

The only effect of the replacement of the nominated block by States nominees will be a tightening of the British control coupled with traditions of a more autocratic rule and greater disregard of popular wishes than we are accustomed to in British India and which these nominees will bring with themselves. But apart from its bearing the character of a nominated block it will also be a larger block numerically. Under the Montagu Reforms, out of 145 members of the Assembly 40 or 27.5 per cent are nominated, if we exclude the member for Berar who, for practical purposes, is an elected member, under the White Paper proposals out of a house of 375 no less than 125 or 33.3 per cent are nominated by the States—an increase of 6 per cent in the nominated element

When we look at the composition of the elected element in the Federal Assembly we find that separate electorates have

not only been retained but considerably extended and the number of those generally expected to side with the British and the Governor-General considerably increased. I believe, in the place of 41 out of 104 or 39 per cent being returned by separate electorates under the existing constitution, we shall have 108 out of 250 or 43 per cent returned by separate electorate under the White Paper scheme. Thus, there can be hardly any doubt that the White Paper Federal Assembly will be a less progressive and more autocratically inclined body than the present Assembly.

It is unnecessary to go into the constitution of the Second Chamber which is bound to be less progressive than the popular house. In a joint session which is provided for, the nominated element will be as much as 235 out of 636 or 37 per cent and a motion of no-confidence in connection with a subject relating to British India against a British Indian minister can never secure a two-thirds majority if State nominees chose to maintain the ministry.

In the provinces the nominated block is done away with, but several provinces like Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces are going to be saddled in its place with a Second Chamber and, if the trend of opinion as it is developing in England gives any indication, other provinces are probably going to follow suit under the advice of the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Whatever justification there may be for a Second Chamber in the Federal Legislature, there is none whatever for it in a subordinate legislature like that of the provinces. Besides, there is no justification for the extra expenditure involved in setting up and maintaining these Second Chambers. Nor does the experience of the working of the Montford Reforms lend any support in their favour even in the provinces, which may be said to be radical or very progressive.

II. Powers Claimed to be Transferred

Now, no constitution can be said to confer self-govern-

ment or responsible government or dominion status much less complete independence, which reserves to the Governor-General and refuses to transfer to ministers under the control of a popular legislature, the administration of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Ecclesiastical Departments. But leaving this alone which White Paper frankly reserves, let us consider the departments it professes to transfer.

In regard to these also, it is clearly laid down that the Governor-General will not be guided by the advice of ministers, if so to be guided would infringe on what are called the Reserved Departments, his special responsibilities and, I may add, also his discretionary powers. These are couched in such general terms that there are hardly any measures which the Governor-General could not hold up or prevent, if he considered it necessary to do so in his wisdom, which will be the final arbiter in the matter. These special responsibilities are so vague and widespread that they may be said to pervade all departments

It is not inconceivable that the most innocent action taken by a minister not in favour with the Governor-General or the Governor—and in this respect the powers of both are identical for all practical purposes within their respective spheres—could easily be regarded as infringing upon his special responsibility in respect of one or other of the seven heads into which it is divided. The much advertised autonomy of the Provinces really gives more autonomy to the Governor than to the people or the minister and enables the Governor-General to have his orders executed in spite of the ministers even when they may happen to deal with a matter falling within the scope of the latter if only the Governor or the Governor-General decides that it infringes on the special responsibility of the one or the other.

Special responsibilities are laid down under seven heads for the Governor-General. They are (I) the prevention of grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of India or any part thereof; (II) the safeguarding of the financial responsibility

and credit of the Federation; (III) the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities; (IV) the securing to the members of the Public Services of any right provided for them by the Constitution Act and the safeguarding of their legitimate rights; (V) the prevention of commercial discrimination; (VII) any matter which affects the administration of any department under the direction and control of the Governor-General, the Governor-General being empowered in each case to determine whether any special responsibility is involved in any given circumstance. The same powers are given *mutatis mutandis* to the Governors in so far as they are applicable to provinces.

The first practically takes away with one hand what it purports to give with the other; law and order, though said to be transferred in the provinces, are thus kept quite safe within the double lock of special responsibility of the Governor-General and the Governor. The elasticity of this phrase is quite well known in this country and I am using no language of exaggeration if I say that it is mere camouflage and a fraud to say that law and order are being transferred when the special responsibility in this respect is reserved in the wide and all-pervasive terms as is done under the White Paper proposal.

As regards the second, admittedly definition of this responsibility is drawn in wide terms and enables the Governor-General to step in whenever any proposal of the minister regarding budgetting or borrowing is considered by him as prejudicing or endangering India's credit in the money market of the world. Past experience has shown that financial stability and credit of India and synonymous with British profit at the expense of India, and British interests have been served so often and so brazen-facedly in the name of India's stability and credit that no Indian is likely to be deceived by words which connote more than their ordinary dictionary meaning. The entire currency and exchange policy of the Government is said to be dictated by these considerations and we know it to our cost how a stroke of the pen or an apparently innocent notification of the Government has the effect of transferring crores

from the hands of Indians to those of the British without the former realising it.

The third will, of course, come very handv in turning many an awkward corner. Our Muslim brethern and others who are in a minority are apt to run away with the idea that British Government is reserving special responsibility to safeguard their interest. Really speaking, if there is anything more calculated than another to keep all the communities warring with each other, it is this. Besides it is a delusion to think that the safeguards are devised to serve any of the Indian minorities. They will find in actual working that after all in all matters of moment it is not they who are meant but the small microscopic minority of those birds of passage, who come from thousand of miles and make hay while the sun shines and then disappear in the evening of their days to enjoy the fruits in their native land again.

The fourth destroys whatever is yet left of autonomy. We shall, indeed, be masters in our own house without having the power to order our servants about to whom we shall be bound to pay their unbearably high salaries, guarantee their pensions and leaves and promotions and what not. It will be easy enough for these so-called civil servants to set at naught not only the policy, decisions and orders of their so-called superiors, the ministers, but to create deadlocks, which will be set down to the discredit of Indians who will be branded as incompetent, and inexperienced ministers to whom it was a mistake, it will be said, to transfer powers.

In the name of preventing commercial discrimination against the British, it is really ensured that the Indian should be discriminated against in the future as he has been in the past. It must be the experience of all businessmen who have anything to do with the Government—and they cannot move an inch without coming across the Government in some form or another—how at every step they have to face situations which a Britisher here has not to face. Go to the coal fields. They will tell you how it is difficult for an Indian colliery

to get a railway siding to his colliery, how it is difficult for him to get wagons and how the Indian is everyday discriminated against in practice. I am not mentioning how it has been possible for a few British concerns to get leases of practically the whole area with the best seams of coal and how Indians have to be content with second and third class collieries and even these they get with difficulty.

I am not forgetting that colliery lands are largely owned by Indians. We know how these things are managed, specially when the owner happens to be a ward of court. The manipulation of railway freights offers an easy handle. When I was looking after the affairs of the All-India Spinners' Association in my province I calculated some years ago that the cost of transport of cotton from Sewan (in the district of Saran where cotton is largely grown), to Madubani in the district of Darbhanga where we produce our best and largest quantity of Khadi, both the districts being within the same division of Tirhut under a Commissioner, was the same as that of transporting cotton from Bombay to Japan and bringing back the cloth made of that cotton to Bombay. I do not know if there has been a change in this respect recently.

Similarly, I was told that the cost of transporting coal from South Africa to Indian cotton mills was the same as that of transporting it from the coalfields of Bihar to the same mills. I am mentioning these few illustrations and they can be multiplied to show how in the past the whole policy of the Government of India has been regulated with an eye not to the benefit of Indians but of foreigners, and if by any chance any minister has temerity to try to be just he will at once be held up as discriminating against the Britisher and the Governor-General or the Governor will have no difficulty in invoking his special responsibility for perpetuating the injustice.

As regards the Indian States, we have already had illustrations how activities of their subjects in favour of constitutional reforms can be throttled and the special responsibility of the Governor-General or the Governor in this respect will be

used for preventing the virus of democracy from spreading into these States.

So much for special responsibilities. The discretionary powers of the Governor-General and the Governors are of a most drastic kind. Under the existing constitution, the Governor has the power of certification and veto, but under the proposal embodied in the White Paper, he can also send messages to the legislature not to proceed with a certain measure of legislation as also to proceed in a certain way; not to pass certain laws as also to pass certain others or that a particular measure must be passed by a particular date and in the event of the legislature refusing or failing to obey his command, it will become a Governor-General's or Governor's Act which will have the force of an Act of legislature without having the odium attached to the name of "ordinance" and without the fetters of a limited duration, which an ordinance has. These proposals place India under a virtual dictatorship. Mr. Churchill described the position admirably in another context :

"The Viceroy or Governor-General was armed with all the powers of a Hitler or Mussolini. By a stroke of pen, he could scatter the constitution and decree any law to be passed for martial law, which was no law at all. Of all these he was the sole judge. Such a functionary was a dictator and he had a very powerful army."

All this power is given not only to the Governor-General but even to Provincial Governors, who are, for the first time, to be invested with powers to pass ordinances and Governor's Acts and all other powers within their spheres which the Governor-General possesses in respect of the country as a whole.

The White Paper proposals further take away certain powers which are now possessed by the Assembly in however attenuated a form they may be. Thus, a discussion of the Railway budget used to furnish an opportunity for the ventilation of grievance in connection with railway administration. Railways could not be discussed and voted upon by the Central

legislature but the creation of the proposed statutory railway authority would have the effect of precluding the future Government and legislature from making any effective criticism of any matter transferred to the statutory authority. That this is not a negligible matter is apparent from the fact that the Railways have some 800 crores invested in them and are very largely national concerns already and where they are not so, they are soon passing into the hands of the State.

III. Finance

(3) When we come to consider the question of finance, the illusory nature of the so-called reforms becomes still more apparent. It has been calculated that 80 per cent of the Central revenue in the Central Government will be eaten up by army expenditure, debt, service, guaranteed pays, pensions and allowances, which will be outside the vote of the Assembly, and the remaining 20 per cent with which alone the minister, supposed to be responsible to the legislature, could play, would be subject to a vote of the upper chamber which could bring it, before a joint session of both Chambers for final determination.

Further, if the Governor-General regards the demand for grants by the minister under any head inadequate for the discharge of his special responsibility, he may include any additional amount which he regards necessary for the discharge of such special responsibility, and the legislature will not be at liberty to vote on the same. Thus it is apparent that the control of the ministry over the public purse is practically nil at the centre.

Considering the proposals from the point of view of the burden they impose on the country it has been said on high authority that the introduction of provincial autonomy will involve an annual expenditure of 6/2 to 8 crores and that of responsibility in the centre another 2 crores every year. In a country which is admittedly the poorest in the world, where the cost of administration is top heavy and certainly out of all

proportion to the income per capita of the population under it, any addition to the already unbearable burden cannot but be regarded with the greatest misgivings, and no responsible person can easily reconcile himself to this additional burden as a price for reforms so illusory, so retrograde and so calculated to perpetuate and tighten the stranglehold on the country.

IV. Future in the Air

There is no provision for any automatic growth of development in the constitution. Everything does and will continue to depend on the sweet will and pleasure of the British Parliament. There is no pretence at self-determination and even the Federation which is to come after fulfilment of so many conditions precedent can come only after a second vote of the House of Parliament.

And what is this federation ? It is a kind of federation which has no parallel in history. In it the rulers of one third of India will be called in to counteract through their nominees the progressive elected elements of the remaining two-thirds. There is absolutely no mutuality in any respect, the princes' nominees will have equal rights with the elected representatives of British India to interfere with the administration of British India without British Indian representatives having the least voice in the administration of the States, which will continue their autocratic rule without so much as even declaring or guaranteeing the elementary, fundamental rights of citizenship, which are, or rather ought to be, the basis and foundation of any allegiance which the people may be required to bear to the State.

In other words, it will be a kind of federation in which unabashed autocracy will sit entrenched in one-third of India and peep in every now and then to strangle popular will in the remaining two-thirds. But the princes themselves will be more helpless than they are now and will soon realise the effect of a federation which is conceived to keep them free from the bane-

ful interference of British Indian people but nonetheless subservient to the Viceroy.

Suspension of Civil Disobedience—Council Programme

I have thus far discussed the dual policy of Government. I come now to our own policies and plans. Events have somehow so happened that since the breach of the Truce in 1932 we have had to steer our course clear of Government policies. The suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement was declared not with reference to any declaration of policy by Government, but with reference to the peculiar moral and spiritual character of our struggle.

I will not go into the events that led up to the historic Patna decision of May 1934—how Gandhiji successfully challenged from jail the Communal Award of the Premier which had threatened to vivisect the Hindu community in twain, how Gandhiji intensified the movement for the abolition of untouchability and his epic fast as part of it, and his release, the Poona Conference and how as a result of things he had heard and seen during the great Harijan tour he came to recommend to the AICC suspension of the Civil Disobedience and confining it to himself. Let the country study the course of events in the statements Gandhiji has issued from time to time.

Some of the factors which must have weighed with Gandhiji when he recommended suspension of Civil Disobedience as a mass movement could not have escaped the notice of even casual observers. Two weaknesses seem to me to have dogged our footsteps.

Firstly, the Congress workers had been gradually, and perhaps unconsciously, led into adoption of methods of secrecy, which reduced what would have been an open battle of defiance into a battle of wits. It was not realised that Satyagraha is essentially a fight on a higher moral plane in which suffering is openly courted and cheerfully borne and which aims at conquering the opponent by an appeal to his moral sense and

in which any attempt to over-reach him rebounds with fatal effect on the Satyagrahi himself.

Secondly, it must be also admitted that the attack of the Government on a vulnerable point succeeded. People were not prepared to lose property to the extent they were prepared to lose liberty and even life and when heavy fines and sequestration of property in lieu of fines and confiscations started on a wholesale scale, gradually demoralisation set in and ultimately broke the back bone of the movement. Attempt was made to continue the struggle by confining it to those individuals who had faith in it, and taking it out of the methods of secrecy. That partly explains the Poona and the Patna decisions.

It has had to be suspended in the very interests of the movement and those of the country. The principal reason was our own weakness and yet I do not feel that there is any reason to be down-hearted. Our object is nothing less than the liberation of a vast country which is as big as a continent with its varied population of many castes and creeds and speaking different languages. The response which the country has made from one end to other to the call of the Congress has been splendid and we have reason to be proud of it. Because our object is great and the task difficult and tremendous we have to consider our own shortcomings and defects of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee.

Naturally certain resolutions and certain announcements which Mahatma Gandhi has made have been subjected to very searching criticism. The value and importance of these resolutions and the statements of Mahatmaji consist in the fact that they have brought in the forefront of discussion certain fundamental considerations. The first statement which Mahatmaji issued from Patna on the 7th April last simultaneously with his correspondence with Dr. Ansari announced his advice to the Congress and Congressmen to suspend Civil Disobedience, except with regard to himself and to those who believed in entry into legislatures, to take up the programme of Council-entry. Both these items were considered at great length at a meeting of

the All-India Congress Committee at Patna in the following May and were endorsed by it. The Council entry programme naturally led to the creation of the Congress Parliamentary Board which has been entrusted with the work of organising, guiding and controlling propaganda in favour of election of Congressmen to the Assembly for the time being.

Now today we are in the midst of a compaign which has led to the formulation of the Congress policy in the legislatures in regard to the White Paper and the Government policy of ruthless repression on which all parties in it are agreed but also unfortunately on what has been called the Communal decision of the British Government on which all are not agreed. It will be recalled that after the Second Round Table Conference, the British Government announced its decision settling from its point of the view the questions of communal representation in the legislatures under the reformed constitution. The decision was given because the Indian members of the Round Table Conference were unable to arrive at an agreed settlement of the outstanding differences on the constitutional question amongst the various communities in India. It has created the unfortunate position that whilst we are unable to agree among ourselves, it is also impossible to accept this decision which is anti-national in many respects and is calculated to retard the progress of the country towards a common national outlook.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that some of the minorities. particularly the Musalmans, are opposed to rejecting it or think in the main it safeguards their interests. The Working Committee had therefore to decide the question on which a large section of Hindus and Sikhs are on the one side and practically all Musalmans, with a few leading exceptions and perhaps members of some other minority communities, are, on the other, the former favouring the unqualified rejection of the decision and the latter equally strongly favouring its acceptance until it was replaced by an agreed settlement. Under the circumstances the Working Committee had no other alternative but to point out the unsatisfactory and anti-national nature of the decision hoping at the same time to be able in

course of time to replace it by an agreed settlement and to that end not to divert the attention of the country by creating an agitation in favour of either accepting or rejecting it.

Mahatmaji's Statement

But events have marched quickly during the past few weeks. Mahatma Gandhi has just made two statements of far reaching importance in which he has recorded his reading of the history of the past fifteen years, placed his finger unerringly on the secret places of our heart and given us a warning for the future. Not even his worst critics have challenged his analysis and some have even gloated over the situation in an 'I told you so' spirit. It will be best for us and for our country if even at the end of these fifteen years of our struggle we realise the true situation. The first statement was in the nature of a challenge and a feeler, the second is the result of the country's reaction to the first.

In the first he declared the things that he holds dearer than life itself—truth and non-violence and khadi, reform and revolution through conversion and not compulsion—and said that as one section of the country was running away from these articles of faith and as the other was giving no effect to the allegiance to them which it professed from year to year there was nothing for it but for him to retire from the Congress. In the second statement he declares his conviction that his retirement is inescapable but as he retires in order to be of more service to the Congress and the country than heretofore he has also suggested a reform in the constitution which alone can save the Congress from disruption.

Now that leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Ansari and the Khan brothers have given their hearty assent to the correctness of Gandhiji's decision I do not think it is necessary for me to take up your time for discussing the pros and cons of the question of his retirement. I should certainly have done so if my own mind ran counter to the opinions of these colleagues but I am in hearty agreement with them though the mind and heart both boggle at the thought of his retirement. But I am

steadied as soon as I remind myself that his decision proceeds out of the depth of his devotion to truth and non-violence and it must spur us on to further effort towards those ideals.

But though Mahatmaji has made up his mind not to seek the vote of the Congress on things that make up the warp and woof of his life, I would ask you not to dismiss those things without a thought and would urge you to realise their implications and to give them some place at least in your programme and your policies. Though I do not claim to have the same living and active faith as Mahatma Gandhi in those things that he has thought some of us at least to hold dear, I must declare my creed and my conviction about them.

About the amendment in the creed. I would ask you only one question. Have we really understood by "peaceful and legitimate" anything but "truthful and non-violent" all these years ? Has the world outside understood our creed differently ? All the credit that we can take today and all the discredit that critics and our self-introspecting hearts pour upon us spring from the fact that we have kept that lofty creed as our ideal. The world should cease to watch our fight with interest if our creed meant anything less than it has meant all these years. Whatever the failure of our civil resistance to civilise our rulers there is no gainsaying the fact that there should have been much more unashamed brutality than we have been victims of, if there had not been this great creed proclaimed by us.

I next come to the yarn franchise and to the much dissussed khadi clause. I may say without being guilty of national vanity that there is no other Flag in the world which expresses in itself purer and loftier ideals. It rules out in one sweep the four-fold course of modern humanity, *viz.*, imperialism, militarism, capitalism and industrialism. The spinning wheel and khadi are not only the living link between the classes and the masses, they are symbols of the country's determination to resist all forms of exploitation by non-violent means. They represent an era of purification of politics and private life. Remove the khadi clause and you will snap the living link between the cities and the villages.

To my mind Truth, Non-violence and Khadi represent a triple force whereby we can achieve the whole of the Karachi programme and more. There is a section of our countrymen who without having achieved even what we pledged ourselves to do at Karachi insist on crying for more. Whilst I would have no objection to amplifying the Karachi programme and elucidating it wherever there may be any fear of a misunderstanding. I would say emphatically that we should do nothing that compromises by one iota the creed of non-violence. Whatever may be our failures we have made rapid strides. Let us not by our impatience undo the work of the last fifteen years. My friends, the socialists, are keen on a more inspiring ideology and would hasten the elimination of all that stands for exploitation. I should like to tell them in all humility but with all the force at my command that there is no greater ideology than is expressed by the creed of truth and non-violence and the determination of the country not to eliminate the men that stand for exploitation but the forces that do so. Our quarrel is with the sin and not the sinner which we all are to a greater or lesser degree. Compulsion will react on us with redoubled force; conversion however slow it may seem, will be the shortest cut and will mean a new contribution to history and civilisation.

Having said this, I would say a word about the reform in the constitution that Mahatmaji has suggested in his second statement. He recommends that the size of the Congress should be considerably curtailed and the representation in the Congress should reflect its hold on the country as a whole. It has been suggested that to make the Congress an efficient deliberative body, the number of delegates should be reduced from 6,000 to 1,000 and each delegate should be regarded not as a representative of a set number of people living within a particular area but should be regarded as in fact he is a representative of the members on the Congress roll and give to those places and provinces proportionally larger representation in the Congress, that will have more members on their rolls and that have been more active in carrying out Congress programme. Whether they, the members, represent the whole nation or not, will depend upon the quantity and quality of service

they render. The Congress influence and hold over the people have never depended upon the number on the actual register, they depend upon what it stands for and the sacrifice that the members have made for achieving the goal.

In conclusion, I would say that in considering Mahatmaji's statements you should remove from your minds any apprehension that you may have that he is going to retire from public life or that by not being physically connected with the Congress his interest will cease or that his help will not be available. I have no such apprehension. I am sure his separation is intended to strengthen and help us and not in any way to weaken or hinder us. I feel that Mahatma Gandhi, outside the Congress which does not whole-heartedly accept his programme, will be more helpful to the country and the Congress than Mahatma Gandhi inside the Congress with the drag of a big unbelieving majority at his back. I do not therefore feel any shock over his impending separation. I do not minimise the effect of such a decision if he comes to it but I wish you to have faith in him and I have no doubt that all will be right, whether he decides to work from within or from outside the Congress.

Conclusion

Let us start with a clean slate on the work in front of us. The need of the hour is not for a bigger or more inspiring programme but for the determination to achieve what little we may set before ourselves. The task is immense. There is today a greater determination on the part of the rulers not to part with power as they have succeeded in creating disruption in our ranks. The ordinance rule of the past four years indicates the extent to which Government can go to suppress the movement for freedom even though it may be probably non-violent. Bengal and N.W. Frontier have been raped seemingly beyond repair. It is difficult to breathe free in the one and it is impossible to understand the situation in the other. There have been deplorable acts of terrorism in Bengal, but unmanning the whole youth of vast areas is not the way to fight it.

The N.W. Frontier Province which has had a severe spell of

repression which the brave Pathans, led by that selfless and patriotic servant, Abdul Gaffar Khan, have borne with exemplary restraint is forbidden ground for him and for his brother. There is constructive work enough and to spare to occupy the time and energies of those who care for it. The resolution on cent per cent Swadeshi that Mahatmaji has embodied in his second statement is a vital one. If the infatuation with high-sounding slogans has not blinded our reasons we should see that khadi with cent per cent Swadeshi is enough to take us to our goal of complete independence which, in Mahatmaji's language "is an impossible dream without the higher classes merging themselves in those millions who are miscalled lower classes."

There is lastly the Council programme. The All-India Congress Committee has decided to contest elections to the Legislative Assembly so that the country might pronounce its verdict on the White Paper and the respressive policy of the Government. I hope that the electors will show by unmistakable action that the Congress possesses their full confidence. Let us not, however, be led away by the idea that Swaraj can be achieved by what we do in the Assembly. Price for freedom must be paid before we can get it, and while we have every reason to be proud of what has been done and what the country has suffered it is, after all, yet inadequate for the great object we have in view.

The task we have taken upon ourselves is great and glorious. It requires inexhaustible patience, unflinching determination and unending sacrifice. Time and world forces are helping us and, above all, God is with us in this great epic struggle of an unarmed people fighting with the weapons of Satyagraha, of Truth and Non-Violence, a most powerful Government armed cap-a-pie and equipped with the latest engines of destruction devised by science and human ingenuity. For us there is no turning back. The goal is clear. It is nothing short of Independence.

Independence is the natural outcome of all that the free-

dom movement in India has stood for. It cannot mean isolation, particularly when we remember that it has to be achieved by non-violence. It means the end of exploitation of one country by another and of one part of the population of the same country by another part. It contemplates a free and friendly association with other nations for the mutual benefit of all. It forbids evil to none, not even to those exploiting us except in so far as they rely upon exploitation rather than good-will. The sanction behind this Independence movement is non-violence which in its positive and dynamic aspect is good-will of and for all. We already see signs of how it has begun appealing to a certain extent to world opinion.

This appeal has to become irresistible. It can do so accordingly as the element of distrust and suspicion, which has its birth in fear, is eliminated and replaced by a sense of security born of confidence in the good-will of India. India having no designs on others, will not then need a large army either for its protection against foreigners or for internal peace which will stand guaranteed by the good-will of her inhabitants. Having no designs on others, she will be able to claim immunity from the evil designs of others and her safety will be buttressed and protected by the good-will of the world at large. Conceived in this light, our Independence ought not to frighten even the British unless they aim at perpetuating the present unnatural conditions.

The method too is crystal clear. It is active, dynamic non-violent mass action. We may fail once we may fail twice, but we are bound to succeed some day. Many have already lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by difficulties which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapons are unique and the world is watching the progress of our great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed and firm in our determination. Satyagraha in its active application may meet with temporary setbacks but it knows not defeat. It is itself a great victory, for as James Lowell put it,

"Truth far ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future
And behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own."

BANDE MATARAM

12

REAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIALISM*

Comrades,

After many years I face you again from this tribune—many weary years of strife and turmoil and common suffering. It is good for us to meet again; it is good for me to see this great host of old comrades and friends, linked together by strong bonds that cannot break, to sense the old brave spirit yet again, to feel your overwhelming kindness and goodwill to one whose greatest privilege it is to have been a comrade and a soldier with all of you in a mighty struggle for freedom. I am heartened and strengthened by you, though even in this great gathering I feel a little lonely. Many a dear comrade and friend has left us, worn out, long before the normal length of our earthly days, by the stress and strain of conflict. One by one they go, leaving a void in our hearts and a dull misery in our minds. They find peace from this turmoil perhaps, and it is well, for they deserved it. They rest after their labours.

But what of us who remain behind with a heavier burden to carry? There is no rest for us or for those who languish in prison or in detention camp. We cannot rest, for rest is betrayal of those who have gone and in going handed the torch of freedom to us to keep alight; it is betrayal of the cause we have espoused and the pledge we have taken, it is betrayal of the millions who never rest.

I am a weary and I have come back like a tired child year-

*Presidential address delivered by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the Lucknow Congress held on 12-14 April, 1936.

ning for solace in the bosom of our common mother, India That solace has come to me in overflowing measure; thousands of hands have been stretched out to me in love and sympathy; millions of silent voices have carried their message of affection to my heart. How can I thank you, men and women of India? How can I express in words feelings that are too deep for utterance?

For many years now I have been a distant looker-on on this Indian scene where once I was an actor, and many a thing has happened that has filled me with distress and anguish. I do not wish to survey this recent part of ours, which must be fresh in your memory, and which has left a sorry trail behind and many knots which are difficult to unravel. But we may not ignore it for out of that past as well as the present, we have to build our future. We have followed high ideals and we have taken pride in the fact that our means are worthy of those ideals. We have been witnesses of many a miracle in this old and battered land of ours, and yet our very success has been followed by failure and disillusion. Temporary failure has little significance when the aim is high and the struggle bound to be a long one; it is but the incentive to further effort. Often it teaches us more than a victory easily won and becomes a prelude to a greater success. But we profit by it only if we learn its lesson and search our minds for an explanation of that failure. Only by constant self-questioning, individual and national, can we keep on the right path. An easy and unthinking confidence is almost as bad as a weak submission to helpless dejection. Real failure comes only when we forget our ideals and objectives and principles and begin to wander away from the road which leads to their realization.

In this crisis of our history, therefore, let us look into ourselves and examine, without pity or prejudice, what we have done and what others have done to us, and seek to find out where we stand today. We dare not delude ourselves or evade real issues for fear of offending others, even though some of these others are comrades whom we respect. That

is the way of self-deception which none who seek great and vital changes can follow except at their peril.

Sixteen years ago, under the inspiration of our leader, we took a new and long step converting this Congress from an ineffective body, feebly functioning amongst the upper classes, into a powerful democratic organization with its roots in the Indian soil and the vast masses who live on it. A handful of our old friends, representing an age and a class which had had its day, left us, fearful of this democratic upsurge and preferring the shelter and protection of British imperialism to joining hands with the new vital forces which convulsed the country and struggled for freedom. Historically they lapsed into the past. But we heard the rumbling of those forces and, for the moment, lined up with them and played a not unworthy part in current history. We sensed the new spirit of mass release, of psychological escape from the cramping effects of long subjection; we gloried in the breaking of the mental bonds that encompassed us. And because our minds became free we felt that political freedom could not be far, for it is often harder to break the bonds of the spirit than physical bonds and chains of iron and steel. We represented the spirit of the age and were marching step by step with countless others in our country and outside. The exhiliaration of being in tune with the masses and with world forces came upon us, and the feeling that we were the agents of historic destiny.

We were engrossed in our national struggle, and the turn it took bore the powerful impress of our great leader and of our national genius. We were hardly conscious then of what was happening outside. And yet our struggle was but part of a far wider struggle for freedom, and the forces that moved us were moving millions of people all over the world and driving them into action. All Asia was astir from the Mediterranean to the Far East, from the Islamic West to the Buddhist East; Africa responded to the new spirit; Europe, broken up by the war, was struggling to find a new equilibrium. And right across a vast area in Europe and Asia, in the Soviet territories, a new conception of human freedom and social

equality fought desperately against a host of enemies. There were great differences in the many aspects of this freedom struggle all over the world and we were misled by them and did not see the common background. Yet if we are to understand these varied phenomena, and derive a lesson from them for our own national struggle, we must try to see and understand the whole picture. And if we do so we cannot fail to observe an organic connection between them which endures through changing situations. If once we grasp this organic bond, the world situation becomes easier to understand and our own national problems take their proper places in the wider picture. We realise then that we cannot isolate India or the Indian problem from that of the rest of the world. To do so is to ignore the real forces that are shaping events and to cut ourselves adrift from the vital energy that flows from them. To do so, again, is to fail to understand the significance of our own problems, and if we do not understand this how can we solve them? We are apt to lose ourselves, as we have indeed done, in petty conflicts and minor questions, like the communal problem, and forget the major issues; we are apt to waste our energy (like our moderate friends do) in interminable discussions over legal quibbles and constitutional questions.

During the troubled aftermath of the Great War came revolutionary changes in Europe and Asia, and the intensification of the struggle for social freedom in Europe and a new aggressive nationalism in the countries of Asia. There were ups and downs, and sometimes it appeared as if the revolutionary urge had exhausted itself and things were settling down. But economic and political conditions were such that there could be no settling down, the existing structure could no longer cope with these new conditions, and all its efforts to do so were vain and fruitless. Everywhere conflicts grew, and a great depression overwhelmed the world and there was a progressive deterioration everywhere except in the wide-flung Soviet territories of the U.S.S.R., where, in marked contrast with the rest of the world, astonishing progress was made in every direction. Two rival economic and political systems faced each other in

the world and, though they tolerated each other for a while, there was an inherent antagonism between them, and they played for mastery on the stage of the world. One of them was the capitalist order which had inevitably developed into vast imperialisms, which, having swallowed the colonial world, were intent on eating each other up. Powerful still and fearful of war, which might endanger their possessions, yet they came into inevitable conflict with each other and prepared feverishly for war. They were quite unable to solve the problems that thereatened them and helplessly they submitted to slow decay. The other was the socialist order of the U.S.S.R., which went from progress to progress, though often at a terrible cost, and where the problems of the capitalist world had ceased to exist.

Capitalism, in its difficulties, took to fascism with all its brutal suppression of what Western civilization had apparently stood for; it became, even in some of its homelands, what its imperialist counterpart had long been in the subject colonial countries. Fascism and imperialism thus stood out as the two faces of the now decaying capitalism, and though they varied in different countries according to national characteristics and political conditions, they represented the same forces of reaction and supported each other, and at the same time came into conflict with each other, for such conflict was inherent in their very nature. Socialism in the West and the rising nationalism of the Eastern and other dependent countries opposed this combination of fascism and imperalism. Nationalism in the East, it must be remembered, was essentially different from the new and terribly narrow nationalism of fascist countries; the former was the historical urge to freedom. the latter the last refuge of reaction.

Thus we see the world divided up into two vast groups today—the imperialist and fascist on one side, the socialist and nationalist on the other. There is some overlapping of the two and the line between them is difficult to draw, for there is mutual conflict between the fascist and imperialist powers, and the nationalism of subject countries has sometimes a tendency to fascism. But the main division holds, and if we keep it in

mind, it will be easier for us to understand world conditions and our own place in them.

Where do we stand, then, we who labour for a free India? Inevitably we take our stand with the progressive forces of the world which are ranged against fascism and imperialism. We have to deal with one imperialism in particular, the oldest and the most far-reaching of the modern world, but powerful as it is, it is but one aspect of world imperialism. And that is the final argument for Indian independence and for the severance of our connection with the British Empire. Between Indian nationalism, Indian freedom, and British imperialism there can be no common ground, and if we remain within the imperialist fold, whatever our name or status, whatever outward semblance of political power we might have, we remain cribbed and confined and allied to and dominated by the reactionary forces and the great financial vested interests of the capitalist world. The exploitation of our masses will still continue and all the vital social problems that face us will remain unsolved. Even real political freedom will be out of our reach, more so radical social changes

With the development of this great struggle all over the world we have seen the progressive deterioration of many of the capitalist-imperialist countries and an attempt at consolidation of the reactionary forces under fascism or nazism or so-called "national" governments. In India the same process has been evident to us during these past years, and the stronger the nationalist movement has grown, the more have efforts been made by our imperialist rulers to break our ranks and to gather together under their banner the reactionary elements in the country. The Round Table Conferences were such attempts and, though they helped our rulers in some measure, they served a useful purpose by showing us clearly the division between the imperialist and the anti-imperialist forces in the country. Unhappily we did not fully profit by this lesson and we still imagine that we can win over some of these imperialist groups to the side of Indian freedom and anti-imperialism, and in a vain attempt to do so we suppress our ideals, blush

for our objectives and tone down our activities.

Meanwhile, the decay of British imperialism in India becomes ever more apparent. It cannot, by its very nature, solve our economic problems and rid us of our terrible poverty, which it has largely itself created It subsists on a normal fare of the fiercest repression and a denial of civil and even personal liberty. It surrounds us with a wide network of spies and, among the pillars of its administration, is the tribe of informers and *agents provocateurs* and the like Its services try to seek comfort for their obvious deterioration and incompetence by perpetually singing songs of mutual adulation Argument gives place to the policeman's baton and the soldier's bayonet and prison and detention camp, and even our extraordinary finances are justified by the methods of the bully. It is astonishing to find to what depths of vulgarity our rulers have descended in their ardent desire to hold on to what they have got, and it is depressing, though perhaps inevitable, that some of our countrymen, more interested in British imperialism than the British themselves, should excel at this deplorable game. So wanting in mental equilibrium are they, so obsessed by fear of the Congress and the national movement it represents, that their wishes become thoughts, their thoughts inferences and their inferences facts, solemnly stated in official publications, and on which the majesty of the British Government rests in India, and people are kept in prison and detention camps without charge or trial. Being interested in psychology, I have watched this process of moral and intellectual decay and realised, even more than I did previously, how autocratic power corrupts and degrades and vulgarizes. I have read sometimes the reports of the recent Assembly meeting and noted the great differences in tone and content between them and the Assembly of ten years ago. I have observed the forced attempts made to discredit the Congress by a reference to the Tilak Swaraj Fund with which I was connected for many years as Secretary of the Congress. But prepared as I was for much, even I was surprised at the insinuations made against our much loved chief, Rajendra Babu, and the charges brought

against the Bihar Relief Fund.[1] A mild criticism by me of official incompetence soon after the Bihar earthquake was deeply resented probably because the truth of it was realised. Newspapers that criticised the official arrangements at a subsequent earthquake were heavily penalized or suppressed. All criticism hurts the sensitive skin of the government, and its reactions are quick and far-reaching. The more incompetent it grows the less it likes being told so. But this does not prevent it from indulging in reckless allegations about others.

This psychological aspect interests me even more than the more aggressive manifestations of British authority in India, for it throws light on much that has happened. It shows us how a clear and definite fascist mentality has developed among our rulers and how closely allied is imperialism to fascism. How this fascist mentality has functioned in the recent past and is functioning today, I shall not go into now. You know well the horror of these years of the nightmare that we have all experienced. We shall not easily forget it and if there are some who have been cowed down by it, there are others who have steeled themselves to a greater resolve to end this infamy in India.

But of one thing I must say a few words, for to me it is one of the most vital things that I value. That is the tremendous deprivation of civil liberties in India. A government that has to rely on the Criminal Law Amendment Act and similar laws, that suppresses the press and literature, that bans hundreds of organization, that keeps people in prison without trial, and that does so many other things that are happening in India today, is a government that has ceased to have even a shadow of a justification for its existence. I can never adjust myself to these conditions; I find them intolerable. And yet I find many of my own countrymen complacent about them, some even

1 In the Legislative Assembly on 9 March 1936, it was alleged that Congress did not present amounts fully and administer its finances properly. References were made to the Tilak Swaraj Fund and the Bihar Relief Fund.

supporting them, some, who have made the practice of sitting on a fence into a fine art, being neutral when such questions are discussed. And I have wondered what there was in common between them and me and those who think as I do. We in the Congress welcome all cooperation in the struggle for Indian freedom; our doors are ever open to all who stand for that freedom and are against imperialism. But they are not open to the allies of imperialism and the supporters of repression and those who stand by the British Government in its suppression of civil liberty. We belong to opposite camps.

Recently, as you know, we have had a typical example of the way government functions in India in the warning issued to a dear and valued comrade of ours, Subhas Chandra Bose. We who know him also know how frivolous are the charges brought against him. But even if there was substance in them we could not tolerate willingly the treatment to which he has long been subjected. He did me the honour to ask me for advice and I was puzzled and perplexed, for it is no easy thing to advise another in such a matter, when such advice might mean prison. Subhas Bose has suffered enough at the cost of his health. Was I justified in adding to this mental and physical agony? I hesitated and at first suggested to him to postpone his departure. But this advice made me unhappy, and I consulted other friends and then advised him differently.[2] I suggested that he should return to his homeland as soon as he could But, it appears, that even before my advice reached him, he had started on his journey back to India.

This instance leads us to think of the larger problem, of the way the bogey of terrorism has been exploited by the government to crush political activity and to cripple physically and mentally the fair province of Bengal. You know that terrorism as such is practically non-existent now in Bengal or in any part of India. Terrorism is always a sign of political immaturity in a people, just so-called constitutionalism, where

2. The government had arrested Bose on 8 April as being "a menace to the peace and tranquillity of the country."

there is no democratic constitution, is a sign of political senility. Our national movement has long outgrown that immature stage, and even the odd individuals who have in the past indulged in terrorist acts have apparently given up that tragic and futile philosophy. The Congress, by its stress on peaceful and effective action, has drawn the youth of the country into its fold and all traces of terroristic activity would long have vanished but for the policy of the government which feeds the roots out of which a helpless violence grows. But terrorism or no terrorism, a government which adopts the methods which have long prevailed in Midnapur and elsewhere in Bengal stands self condemned. Similar methods have also long prevailed in the Frontier Province, although there is no hint of terroristic activity there, and that fine man and true beloved of millions, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, still lies in prison. Excuses differ, but the real reason is the ever-growing fascist mentality of our rulers.

This is one side of the picture. What of us? I have found a spirit of disunion spreading over the land, a strange malaise, and petty conflicts amongst old comrades growing ever bigger and interfering with all activity. We have forgotten for the moment the larger ideals we stood for and we quarrel over petty issues. We have largely lost touch with the masses and, deprived of the life-giving energy that flows from them, we dry up and weaken and our organization shrinks and loses the power it had. First things must always come first, and because we have forgotten this and argue and dispute over secondary matters, we are in danger of losing our bearings.

Every great struggle has its ups and downs and temporary failures. When such a setback occurs there is a reaction when the fund of national energy is exhausted and has to be re-charged. That happens again and again, and yet that is not an adequate explanation of all that has taken place. Our direct action struggles in the past were based on the masses, and especially the peasantry, but the backbone and leader-ship were always supplied by the middle classes, and this, under the circumstances, was inevitable. The middle classes

are a vague group or groups; at the top, a handful of them are closely allied to British imperialism; at the bottom are the dispossessed and other groups who have been progressively crushed by economic circumstances and out of whose ranks come the advanced political workers and revolutionaries; in between are the centre groups, which tend often to side with the advanced elements, but which also have alliances with the upper groups and live in the hope of joining their superior ranks. A middle class leadership is thus often a distracted leadership, looking in two directions at the same time. In times of crisis and struggle, when unity of aim and activity is essential, this two-faced leadership is bound to injure the cause and to hold back when a forward move is called for. Being too much tied up with property and the goods of this world, it is fearful of losing them, and it is easier to bring pressure on it and to exhaust its stamina. And yet, paradoxically, it is only from the middle class intellectuals that revolutionary leadership comes, and we in India know that our bravest leaders and our stoutest comrades have come from the ranks of the middle classes. But by the very nature of our struggle, these front rank leaders are taken away and the others who take their place tire and are influenced more by the static element of their class. That has been very evident during our recent struggle when our propertied classes were hit hard by the government's drastic policy of seizure and confiscation of monies and properties, and were thus induced to bring pressure for the suspension of the struggle.

How is the problem to be solved then? Inevitably, we must have middle class leadership but this must look more towards the masses and draw strength and inspiration from them. The Congress must be not only for the masses, as it claims to be, but of the masses; only then will it really be for the masses. I have a feeling that our relative weakness today is due to a certain decay of our middle class elements and our divorce from the people at large. Our policies and ideas are governed far more by this middle class outlook than by a consideration of the needs of the great majority of the population. Even the problems that trouble us are essentially

middle class problems, like the communal problem, which have no significance for the masses.

This is partly due, I think, to a certain historical growth during the last fifteen years to which we have failed to adapt ourselves, to a growing urgency of economic problems affecting the masses, and to a rising mass consciousness which does not find sufficient outlet through the Congress. This was not so in 1920 and later, when there was an organic link between the Congress and the masses, and their needs and desires, vague as they were, found expression in the Congress. But as those needs and desires have taken more definite shape, they have not been so welcome to other elements in the Congress and that organic connection has gone. That, though regrettable, is really a sign of growth and, instead of lamenting it, we must find a new link and a new connection on a fresh basis which allows for growth of mass consciousness within the Congress. The middle class claim to represent the masses had some justification in 1920; it has much less today, though the lower middle classes have still a great deal in common with the masses.

Partly also our divorce from the people at large is due to a certain narrowness of our Congress constitution. The radical changes made it fifteen years ago brought it in line with existing conditions then, and it drew in large numbers and became an effective instrument of national activity. Though the control and background were essentially middle class and urban, it reached the remotest village and brought with it political and economic consciousness to the masses, and there was widespread discussion of national issues in city and village alike. One could feel the new life pulsating through this vast land of ours and, as we were in harmony with it, we drew strength from it. The intense repression by the government during later years broke many of our physical and outward bonds with our countryside. But something more than that happened. The vague appeal of earlier days no longer sufficed and on the new economic issues that were forcing themselves on us, we hesitated to give a definite opinion.

Worse even than the physical divorce, there was a mental divorce between the middle class elements and the mass elements. Our constitution no longer fitted in with changing conditions; it lost its roots in the soil and became a matter of small committees functioning in the air. It still had the mighty prestige of the Congress name behind it and this carried it a long way, but it had lost the living democratic touch. It became a prey to authoritarianism and a battleground for rival cliques fighting for control, and, doing so, stooping to the lowest and most objectionable of tactics. Idealism disappeared, and in its place there came opportunism and corruption. The constitutional structure of the Congress was unequal to facing the new situation; it could be shaken up anywhere almost by a handful of unscrupulous individuals. Only a broad democratic basis could have saved it, and this was lacking.

Last year an attempt was made to revise the constitution in order to get rid of some of these evils.[3] How far that attempt has succeeded or not I am not competent to judge. Perhaps it has made the organization more efficient, but efficiency means little if it has no strength behind it, and strength, for us, can only come from the masses. The present constitution stresses still further the authoritarian side of the organization, and, in spite of stressing rural representation, does not provide effective link with the masses.

The real problem for us is, how in our struggle for independence we can join together all the anti-imperialist forces in the country, how we can make a broad front of our mass elements with the great majority of the middle classes which stands for independence. There has been some talk of a joint front but, so far as I can gather, this refers to some alliance among the upper classes, probably at the expense of the masses. That surely can never be the idea of the Congress,

1. The members of communal organizations were prohibited from joining the Congress and a greater proportion was reserved for rural representation.

and if it favours it, it betrays the interests it has claimed to represent, and loses the very reason for its existence. The essence of a joint popular front must be uncompromising opposition to imperialism, and the strength of it must inevitably come from the active participation of the peasantry and workers.

Perhaps you have wondered at the way I have dealt at some length with the background of international and national affairs and not touched so far the immediate problems that fill your minds. You may have grown impatient. But I am convinced that the only right way of looking at our own problems is to see them in their proper place in a world-setting. I am convinced that there is intimate connection between world events, and our national problem is but a part of the world problem of capitalist imperialism. To look at each event apart from the others and without understanding the connection between them must lead to the formation of erratic and erroneous views. Look at the vast panorama of world change today, where mighty forces are at grips with each other and dreadful war darkens the horizon: subject peoples struggling for freedom and imperialism crushing them down; exploited classes facing their exploiters and seeking freedom and equality; Italian imperialism bombing and killing the brave Ethiopians; Japanese imperialism continuing its aggression in north China and Mongolia; British imperialism piously objecting to other countries misbehaving, yet carrying on in much the same way in India and the Frontier; and behind it all a decaying economic order which intensifies all these conflicts. Can we not see an organic connection in all these various phenomena? Let us try to develop the historic sense so that we can view current events in proper perspective and understand their real significance. Only then can we appreciate the march of history and keep step with it.

I realise that in this address I am going a little beyond the usual beat of the Congress President. But I do not want you to have me under any false pretences and we must have perfect frankness with each other. Most of you must know my views on social and economic matters, for I have often given expression

to them. Yet you chose me as President. I do not take that choice to mean an endorsement by you all, or by a majority, of those views, but I take it that this does mean that those views are spreading in India and that most of you will be so indulgent as at least to consider them.

I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problem and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense. Socialism is, however, something even more than an economic doctrine; it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interests in land and industry, as well as the feudal and autocratic Indian states system. That means the ending of private proverty, except in a restricted sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of cooperative service. It means ultimately a change in our instincts and habits and desires. In short, it means a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order. Some glimpse we can have of this new civilization in the territories of the USSR. Much has happened there which has pained me greatly and with which I disagree, but I look upon that great and fascinating unfolding of a new order and a new civilization as the most promising feature of our dismal age. If the future is full of hope it is largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done, and I am convinced that, if some world catastrophe does not intervene, this new civilization will spread to other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds.

I do not know how or when this new order will come to India. I imagine that every country will fashion it after its own way and fit it in with its national genius. But the essential basis of that order must remain and be a link in the world order that will emerge out of the present chaos.

Socialism is thus for me not merely an economic doctrine which I favour; it is a vital creed which I hold with all my head and heart. I work for Indian independence because the nationalist in me cannot tolerate alien domination; I work for it even more because for me it is the inevitable step to social economic change. I should like the Congress to become a socialist organisation and to join hands with the other forces in the world which are working for the new civilization. But I realise that the majority in the Congress, as it is constituted today, may not be prepared to go thus far. We are a nationalist organization and we think and work on the nationalist plane It is evident enough now that this is too narrow even for the limited objective of political independence, and so we talk of the masses and their economic needs. But still most of us hesitate, because of our nationalist bockground, to take a step which might frighten away some vested interests. Most of those interests are already ranged against us and we can expect little from them except opposition even in the political struggle.

Much as I wish for the advancement of socialism in this country, I have no desire to force the issue in the Congress and thereby create difficulties in the way of our struggle for independence. I shall cooperate gladly and with all the strength in me with all those who work for independence even though they do not agree with the socialist solution. But I shall do so stating my position frankly and hoping in course of time to convert the Congress and the country to it, for only thus can I see it achieving independence. It should surely be possible for all of us who believe in independence to join our ranks together even though we might differ on the social issue. The Congress has been in the past a broad front representing various opinions joined together by that common bond. It must continue as such even though the difference of those opinions becomes more marked.

How does socialism fit in with the present ideology of the Congress? I do not think it does. I believe in the rapid industrialization of the country and only thus, I think, will

the standards of the people rise substantially and poverty be combated. Yet I have cooperated whole heartedly in the past with the khadi programme and I hope to do so in the future because I believe that khadi and village industries have a definite place in our present economy. They have a social, a political, and an economic value which is difficult to measure but which is apparent enough to those who have studied their effects. But I look upon them more as temporary expedients of a transition stage rather than as solutions of our vital problems. That transition stage might be a long one, and in a country like India, village industries might well play an important, though subsidiary, role even after the development of industrialism But though I cooperate in the village industries programme my ideological approach to it differs considerably from that of many others in the Congress who are opposed to industrialization and socialism.

The problem of untouchability and the Harijans again can be approached in different ways. For a socialist it presents no difficulty, for under socialism there can be no such differentiation or victimization. Economically speaking, the Harijans have constituted the landless proletariat and an economic solution removes the social barriers that custom and tradition have raised.

I come now to a question which is probably occupying your minds—the new Act passed by the British Parliament and our policy in regard to it. This Act has come into being since the last Congress met, but even at that time we had had a foretaste of it in the shape of the White Paper, and I know of no abler analysis of those provisions than that contained in the presidential address of my predecessor (Dr Rajendra Prasad) in this high office. The Congress rejected that proposed constitution, and resolved to have nothing to do with it. The new Act, as is well known, is an even more retrograde measure, and has been condemned by even the most moderate and cautious of our politicians. If we rejected the White Paper, what then are we to do with this new charter of slavery to strengthen the bonds of imperialist domination and to inten-

sify the exploitation of our masses ? And even if we forget its content for a while, can we forget the insult and injury that have accompanied it, the contemptuous defiance of our wishes, the suppression of civil liberties, and the widespread repression that has been our normal lot ? If they had offered to us the crown of heaven with this accompaniment and with dishonour, would we not have spurned it as inconsistent with our national honour and self-respect ? What, then, of this ?

A charter of slavery is no law for the slave, and though we may perforce submit for a while to it and to the humiliation of ordinances and the like, inherent in that enforced submission is the right and desire to rebel against it and to end it.

Our lawyers have examined this new constitution and have condemned it. But constitutions are something much more than legal documents. "The real constitution", said Ferdinand Lassalle (founder of the German Social Democratic Party and leader of the labour movement), consists of "the actual relationships of power", and the working of this power we see even today, after the Act has been passed. That is the constitution we have to face, not the fine phrases which are sometimes presented to us, and we can only deal with it with the strength and power generated by the people of the country.

To this Act our attitude can only be one of uncompromising hostility and a constant endeavour to end it. How can we do this ?

Since my return from Europe I have had the advantage of full and frank discussion with my colleagues of the Working Committee. All of us have agreed that the Act has to be rejected and combated. but all of us have not been able to agree to the manner of doing so. We have pulled together in the past and I earnestly hope that we shall do so in the future, but in order to do so effectively we must recognise that there are marked differences in our outlooks. I do not yet know, as I write, what the final recommendation of the Working Committee will be on

this issue. I can only, therefore, venture to put before you my own personal views on the subject, not knowing how far they represent the views of Congressmen. I should like to make it clear, however, in fairness to my old colleagues of the Working Committee, that the majority of them do not agree with all the views I am going to express. But whether we agree or disagree, or whether we agree to differ, there is a strong desire on our part to continue to cooperate together, laying stress on our many points of agreement rather than on the differences. That is the right course for us and, as a democratic organisation, that is the only course open to us.

I think that, under the circumstances, we have no choice but to contest the elections to the new provincial legislatures in the event of their taking place. We should seek election on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, with our demand for a constituent assembly in the forefront. I am convinced that the only solution of our political and communal problems will come through such an assembly, provided it is elected on an adult franchise and a mass basis That assembly will not come into existence till at least a semi-revolutionary situation has been created in this country and the actual relationships of power, apart from paper constitutions, are such that the people of India can make their will felt. When that will happen I cannot say, but the world is too much in the grip of dynamic forces today to admit of static conditions in India or elsewhere for long. We may thus have to face this issue sooner than we might expect. But obviously a constituent assembly will not come through the new Act or the new legislatures. Yet we must press this demand and keep it before our country and the world, so that when the time comes we may be ripe for it.

A constituent assembly is the only proper and democratic method for the framing of our constitution, and for its delegates than to negotiate a treaty with the representatives of the British Government. But we cannot go to it with blank minds in the hope that something good will emerge out of it. Such an assembly, in order to be fruitful, must have previous thought behind it and a definite scheme put forward by an organised

group. The actual details, as to how the assembly is to be convened, must depend on the circumstances then existing and need not trouble us now. But it will be our function as the Congress, to know exactly what we are after, to place this clearly and definitely before the assembly, and to press for its acceptance.

One of the principal reasons for our seeking election will be to carry the message of the Congress to the millions of voters and to the scores of millions of the disfranchised, to acquaint them with our future programme and policy, to make the masses realise that we not only stand for them but that we are of them and seek to cooperate with them in removing their social and economic burdens. Our appeal and message will not be limited to the voters, for we must remember that hundreds of millions are disfranchised and they need our help most, for they are at the bottom of the social ladder and suffer most from exploitation. We have seen in the past widespread official interference in the elections; we shall have to face that, as well as the serried and monied ranks of the reactionaries. But the real danger will come from our toning down our programme and policy in order to win over the hesitating and compromising groups and individuals. If we compromise on principles, we shall fall between two stools and deserve our fall. The only right way and the only safe way is to stand foursquare on our own programme and to compromise with no one who has opposed the national struggle for freedom in the past, or who is in any way giving support to British imperialism.

When we have survived the election, what then are we to do ? Office or no office ? A secondary matter, and yet behind that issue lie deep questions of principle and vital differences of outlook, and a decision on that, either way, has far-reaching consequences. Behind it lies, somewhat hidden, the question of independence itself and whether we seek revolutionary changes in India or are working for petty reforms under the aegis of British imperialism. We go back again in thought to the clash of ideas which preceded the changes in the Congress in 1920. We made a choice then deliberately and with deter-

mination, and discarded the old sterile creed of reformism. Are we to go back again to that blind and suffocating lane, after all these years of brave endeavour, and to wipe out the memory of what we have done and achieved and suffered ? That is the issue and let none of us forget it when we have to give our decision. In this India, crying aloud for radical and fundamental change, in this world pregnant with revolutionary and dynamic possibility, are we to forget our mission and our historic destiny, and slide back to static futility ? And if some of us feel tired and hunger for rest and quiet, do we imagine that India's masses will follow our lead, when elemental forces and economic necessity are driving them to their inevitable goal ? If we enter the backwaters, others will take our place on the bosom of the flowing stream and will dare to take the rapids and ride the torrent.

How has this question arisen ? If we express our hostility to the Act and reject the entire scheme, does it not follow logically that we should have nothing to do with the working of it and should prevent its functioning, in so far as we can ? To accept office and ministry, under the conditions of the Act, is to negative our rejection of it and so stand self-condemned. National honour and self-respect cannot accept this position, for it would inevitably mean our cooperation in some measure with the repressive apparatus of imperialism, and we would become partners in this repression and in the exploitation of our people. Of course, we would try to champion the rights of the people and would protest against repression, but as ministers under the Act, we could do very little to give relief and we would have to share responsibility for the administration with the apparatus of imperialism, for the deficit budgets, for the suppression of labour and the peasantry. It is always dangerous to assume responsibility without power, even in democratic countries; it will be far worse with this undemocratic constitution, hedged in with safeguards and reserved powers and mortgaged funds, where we have to follow the rules and regulations of our opponents' making. Imperialism sometimes talks of cooperation but the kind of cooperation it wants is usually known as surrender, and the ministers who accept office will

have to do so at the price of surrender of much that they might have stood for in public. That is a humiliating position which self-respect itself should prevent one from accepting. For our great national organisation to be party to it is to give up the very basis and background of our existence.

Self-respect apart, commonsense tells us that we can lose much and gain little by acceptance of office in terms of the Act. We cannot get much out of it, or else our criticism of the Act itself is wrong, and we know it is not so. The big things for which we stand will fade into the background and petty issues will absorb our attention, and we shall lose ourselves in compromises and communal tangles, and disillusion with us will spread over the land. If we have a majority, and only then can the question of acceptance of office arise, we shall be in a position to dominate the situation and so prevent reactionaries and imperialists from profiting by it. Office will not add to our real strength, it will only weaken us by making us responsible for many things that we utterly dislike.

Again, if we are in a minority, the question of office does not arise. It may be, however, that we are on the verge of a majority and with the cooperation of other individuals and groups we can obtain office. There is nothing inherently wrong in our acting together with others on specific issues of civil liberty or economic or other demands, provided we do not compromise on any principle. But I can imagine few things more dangerous and more likely to injure us than the acceptance of office on the sufferance of others. That would be an intolerable position.

It is said that our chances at the elections would increase if we announce that we were prepared to accept office and ministries. Perhaps that might be so, for all manners of other people, eager for the spoils and patronage that office gives, would then hurry to join us. Does any Congressman imagine that this would be a desirable development or that we would gain strength thereby ? Again it is said that more voters would vote for us if they knew that we were going to form ministries.

That might happen if we deluded them with false promises of what we might do for them within the Act; but a quick nemesis would follow our failure to give effect to those promises and failure would be inevitable if the promises were worthwhile.

There is only one straight course open to us, to go to the people with our programme and make it clear to them that we cannot give effect to the major items in it under present conditions, and therefore, while we use the platform of the legislatures to press that programme, we seek to end those imperialist bodies by creating deadlocks in them whenever we are in a position to do so. Those deadlocks should preferably take place on those programmes so that the masses might learn how ineffective for their purposes are these legislatures.

On fact is sometimes forgotten--the provision for second chambers in many of the provinces. These chambers will be reactionary and will be exploited by the Governor to check any forward tendencies in the lower house. They will make the position of a minister, who seeks advance, even more difficult and unenviable.

Some people have suggested, though their voices are hushed now, that provincial autonomy might be given on this office issue and each provincial Congress Committee should be empowered to decide it for its own province. An astonishing and fatal suggestion playing into the hands of our imperialist rulers. We who have laboured for Indian unity can never be parties to any proposal which tends to lessen that unity. That way lies disaster and a disruption of the forces working for freedom. If we agree to this, why then should we also not agree to the communal issue being decided provincially, or many other issues, where individual provinces might think differently ? First issues will sink into the background, independence itself will fade away, and the narrowest provincialism raise its ugly head. Our policy must be uniform for the whole of India, and it must place first things first, and independence is the first thing of all.

So I am convinced that for the Congress to favour the

acceptance of office, or even to hesitate and waver about it, would be a vital error. It will be a pit from which it would be difficult for us to come out. Practical statesmanship is against it, as well as the traditions of the Congress and the mentality we have sought to develop in the people. Psychologically, any such lead might have disastrous consequences. If we stand for revolutionary changes, as we do, we have to cultivate a revolutionary mentality among our people, and anything that goes against it is harmful to our cause.

This psychological aspect is important. For we must never forget, and never delude our masses into imagining, that we can get any real power or real freedom through working these legislatures. We may use them certainly to advance our cause to some extent, but the burden of the struggle for freedom must fall on the masses, and primarily, therefore, our effective work must lie outside legislatures. Strength will come from the masses and from our work among them and our organisation of them.

Of secondary importance though the work in the legislatures is, we may not treat it casually and allow it to become a hindrance to our other work Therefore, it is necessary for the Congress. through its executive, to have direct control over the elections and the programme placed before the country, as well as the activity in the legislatures. Such control will inevitably be exercised through committees and boards appointed for the purpose, but the continued existence of semi-autonomous parliamentary boards seems to be undesirable. Provision should also be made for a perodical review of all such activities, so that Congressmen in general and the country should keep in touch with them and should influence them.

We have considered the provincial elections which, it is said, may take place early next year. The time is far off yet, and it is by no means impossible that these elections may not take place for a much longer time or may not take place at all, and the new Act may take its rightful place in oblivion. Much may happen in the course of the next year, and war is ever on

the horizon, to upset the schemes and time-tables of our rulers. But we cannot speculate on this, and we have to make provision for contingencies. That decision might even have been delayed, but dangerous and compromising tendencies seek to influence Congress policy, and the Congress cannot remain silent when the issue is raised and its whole future is in the balance.

The provincial legislatures may come, but few persons, I imagine, are confident about the coming of the federal part of this unholy structure. So far as we are concerned, we shall fight against it to our utmost strength, and the primary object of our creating deadlocks in the provinces and making the new Act difficult of functioning, is to kill the federation With the federation dead, the provincial end of the Act will also go and leave the slate clean for the people of India to write on. That writing, whatever it be, can never admit the right of the Indian states to continue as feudal and autocratic monarchies. They have long survived their day, propped up by an alien power, and have become the strangest anomalies in a changing world. The future has no place for autocracy or feudalism; a free India cannot tolerate the subjection of many of its children and their deprivation of human rights, nor can it ever agree to a dissection of its body and a cutting up of its limbs If we stand for any human, political, social or economic rights for ourselves, we stand for those identical rights for the people of the states.

I have referred to the terrible suppression of civil liberties by the British Government in India. But in the states matters are even worse, and though we know that the real power behind those states is that of British imperialism, this tragic suppression of our brothers by their own countrymen is of painful significance. Indian rulers and their ministers have spoken and acted increasingly in the approved fascist manner, and their record during the past few years especially has been one of aggressive opposition to our national demands. States which are considered advanced ban the Congress organisation and other insult to our national flag, and decree new laws to suppress the press.[4] What shall we say of the more backward and primitive

4. The hoisting of the national flag had been banned in the state of Mysore.

states.

There is one more matter concerning the Constitution Act which has given rise to much controversy. This is the communal decision. Many people have condemned it strongly and, I think, rightly; few have a good world for it. My own viewpoint is, however, somewhat different from that of others. I am not concerned so much with what it gives to this group or that but more so with the basic idea behind it. It seeks to divide India into numerous separate compartments, chiefly on a religious basis, and thus makes the development of democracy and economic policy very difficult. Indeed, the communal decision and democracy can never go together. We have to admit that, under present circumstances, and so long as our policies are dominated by middle class elements, we cannot do away with communalism altogether. But to make a necessary exception in favour of our Muslim or Sikh friends is one thing, to spread this evil principle to numerous other groups and thus to divide up the electoral machinery and the legislature into many compartments is a far more dangerous proposition. If we wish to function democratically the proposed communal arrangement will have to go, and I have no doubt that it will go. But it will not go by the methods adopted by the aggressive opponents of the decision These methods result inevitably in perpetuating the decision, for they help in continuing a situation which prevents any reconsideration.

I have not been enamoured of the past Congress policy in regard to the communal question and its attempts to make pacts and compromises. Yet essentially I think it was based on a sound instinct. First of all, the Congress always put independence first and other questions, including the communal one, second, and refused to allow any of those other questions to take pride of place. Secondly, it argued that the communal problem had arisen from a certain set of circumstances which enabled the third party to exploit the other two. In order to solve it, one had either to get rid of the third party (and that means independence), or get rid of that set of circumstances, which meant a friendly approach by the parties concerned and an attempt to soften the prejudice and fear that filled them.

Thirdly, that the majority community must show generosity in the matter to allay the fear and suspicion that minorities, even though unreasonably, might have.

That analysis is, I think, perfectly sound. I would add that, in my opinion, a real solution of the problem will only come when economic issues, affecting all religious groups and cutting across communal boundaries, arise. Apart from the upper middle classes, who live in hopes of office and patronage, the masses and the lower middle classes have to face identical political and economic problems. It is odd and significant that all the communal demands of any group, of which so much is heard, have nothing whatever to do with these problems of the masses and the lower middle classes.

It is also significant that the principal communal leaders, Hindu or Muslim or other, are political reactionaries, quite apart from the communal question. It is sad to think how they have sided with British imperialism in vital matters, how they have given their approval to the suppression of civil liberty, how during these years of agony they have sought to gain narrow profit for their group at the expense of the larger cause of freedom. With them there can be no cooperation, for that would mean cooperation with reaction. But I am sure that with the larger masses and the middle classes, who may have temporarily been led away by the specious claims of their communal leaders, there must be fullest cooperation, and out of that cooperation will come a fairer solution of this problem.

I am afraid I cannot get excited over this communal issue, important as it is temporarily. It is after all a side issue, and it can have no real importance in the larger scheme of things. Those who think of it as the majority issue, think in terms of British imperialism continuing permanently in this country. Without that basis of thought, they would not attach so much importance to one of its inevitable offshoots. I have no such fear and so my vision of a future India contains neither imperialism nor communalism.

Yet the present difficulty remains and has to be faced.

Especially our sympathy must go to the people of Bengal who have suffered most from these communal decisions, as well as from the heavy hand of the government. Whether opportunity offers to improve their situation in a friendly way, we must seize it. But always the background of our action must be the national struggle for independence and the social freedom of the masses.

I have referred previously to the growing divorce between our organisation and the masses. Individually many of us still have influence with the masses and our word carries weight with them, and who can measure the love and reverence of Indian millions for our leader. Gandhi ? And yet organisationally we have lost that intimate touch that we had. (The social reform activities of the khadi and village industries and Harijan organisations keep large numbers of our comrades in touch with the masses and those contacts bear fruit. But they are essentially non-political and so, politically, we have largely lost touch). These are many reasons for this and some are beyond our control. Our present Congress constitution is, I feel, not helpful in developing these contacts or in encouraging enough the democratic spirit in its primary committees. These committees are practically rolls of voters who meet only to elect delegates or representatives, and take no part in the discussion or the formation of policy.

It is interesting to read in that monumental and impressive record, the Webbs' new book on Russia, how the whole Soviet structure is based on a wide and living democratic foundation. Russia is not supposed to be a democratic country after the Western pattern, and yet we find the essential of democracy present in far greater degree amongst the masses there than anywhere else. The six hundred thousand town and villages there have a vast democratic organisation, each with its own soviet, constantly discussing, debating, criticising, helping in the formulation of policy, electing representatives to higher committees. This organization of citizens covers the entire population over 18 years of age. There is yet another vast organization

of the people as producers, and a third, equally vast, as consumers. And thus scores of millions of men and women are constantly taking part in the discussion of public affairs, and actually in the administration of the country. There has been no such practical application of the democratic process in history.

All this is, of course, utterly beyond us, for it requires a change in the political and economic structure and much else before we can experiment that way. But we can profit by that example still, and try in our own limited way to develop democracy in the lowest rungs of the Congress ladder and make the primary committee a living organization.

An additional method for us to increase our contacts with the masses is to organize them as producers and then affiliate such organizations to the Congress or have full cooperation between the two. Such organizations of producers as exist today, such as trade unions and present unions, as well as other anti-imperialist organisations, could also be brought within this sphere of mutual cooperation for the good of the masses and for the struggle for national freedom. Thus the Congress could have an individual as well as a corporate membership, and retaining its individual character, could influence, and be influenced by, other mass elements

These are big changes that I have hinted at, and I am by no means sure how they can be brought about, or whether it is possible to go far in this direction in the near future. Still we must move to some extent, at least, if we are to have our roots in the soil of India and draw life and strength from its millions. The subject is fascinating but complicated and can only be tackled by an expert committee which I trust will be appointed on behalf of the Congress. The report of that committee must be freely discussed so as to get the widest backing for it.

All this will take us to the next Congress. Meanwhile, perhaps some urgent changes are needed in our constitution to remove anomalies and avoid difficulties. Owing to my absence I have had little experience of the working of the new constitution, and cannot make any concrete suggestions. The

reduction in the numbers of delegates[5] and All-India Congress Committee members would be, to some extent, desirable if there was a background of widespread activity in the primary and secondary committees.[6] Without it, it makes us even less responsive to mass opinion, and, therefore, an increase seems desirable. But the real solution is to increase the interest and day-to-day activity of the lower committees.

I have been told that the manual labour franchise has not been a success, and has led to a great deal of evasion. If that is so, a change is desirable, for a constitution must be such as can be worked easily and without subterfuge.

The Congress is an all-inclusive body and represents many interests, but essentially it is a political organization with various subsidiary and allied organizations like the Spinners Association and the Village Industries Association.[7] These allied organizations work in the economic field, but they do not seek directly to remove the burdens of the peasantry under the present system of land tenure. Nor can the Congress, situated as it is, wholly function as a peasant organization, although in many provinces it has espoused the cause of the peasantry and brought them much relief. It seems to me necessary that the Congress should encourage the formation of peasant union as well as workers' unions, and cooperate with such as already exist, so that the day-to-day struggle of the masses might be carried on the basis of their economic demands and other grievances. This identification of the Congress with the econo-

5. At the Bombay session the number of delegates had been reduced from 6,000 to 2,000

6. One of the conditions laid down by the Congress constitution was that for eligibility to election to an office a person should have performed some manual labour on behalf of the Congress in the form of spinning or other allied activities

7. The All-India Village Industries Association was formed at the Bombay session on 27 October 1934 to work for the revival and encouragement of village industries and the moral and physical advancement of the villagers.

mic struggle of the masses will bring us nearer to them and nearer to freedom than anything else. I would welcome also the organization of other special interests, like those of the women, in the general framework of our national struggle for freedom. The Congress would be in a position to coordinate all these vital activities and thus to be based on the widest possible mass foundation.

There has been some talk of militant programme and militant action. I do not know what exactly is meant, but if direct action on a national scale or civil disobedience are meant, then I would say that I see no near prospects of them. Let us not indulge in tall talk before we are ready for big action. Our business today is to put our house in order, to sweep away the defeatist mentality of some people, and to build up our organization with its mass affiliations, as well as to work amongst the masses. The time may come, and that sooner perhaps than we except, when we might be put to the test. Let us get ready for that test. Civil disobedience and the like cannot be switched on and off when we feel like doing so. It depends on many things, some of which are beyond our control, but in these days of revolutionary change and constantly recurring crises in the world, events often move faster than we do. We shall not lack for opportunities.

The major problem of India today is that of the land—or rural poverty and unemployment and a thoroughly out of date land system. A curious combination of circumstances has held back India during the past few generations, and the political and economic garments it wears no longer fit it and are torn and tattered. In some ways our agrarian conditions are not unlike those of France hundred and fifty years ago, prior to the great revolution. They cannot continue so for long. At the same time, we have become parts of international capitalism and we suffer the pains and crises which afflict this decaying system. As a result of these elemental urges and conflicts of world forces what will emerge in India none can say. But we can say with confidence that the present order has reached the evening of its day, and it is up to us to try to mould the future as we

would like it to be.

The world is filled with rumours and alarms of war. In Abyssinia (Ethiopia) bloody and cruel war has already gone on for many months, and we have watched anew how hungry and predatory imperialism behaves in its mad search for colonial domains. We have watched also with admiration the brave fight of the Ethiopians for their freedom against heavy odds. You will permit me, I feel sure, to greet them on your behalf and express our deep sympathy for them. Their struggle is something more than a local struggle. It is one of the first effective checks by an African people on an advancing imperialism and already it has had far-reaching consequences.

In the Far East also, war hovers on the horizon and we see an Eastern imperialism advancing methodically and pitilessly over ancient China and dreaming of world empire. Imperialism shows its claws wherever it may be, in the West or in the East.

In Europe an aggressive fascism or nazism steps continuously on the brink of war and vast armed camps arise in preparation for what seems to be the inevitable end of all this. Nations join hands to fight other nations, and progressive forces in each country ally themselves to fight the fascist menace.

Where do we come in in this lawful game ? What part shall we play in this approaching tragedy ? It is difficult to say. But we must not permit ourselves to be passive tools exploited for imperialist ends. It must be our right to say whether we join a war or not, and without that consent there should be no co-operation from us. When the time comes we may have little say in the matter, and so it becomes necessary for the Congress to declare clearly now its opposition to India's participation in any imperialist war, and every war that will be waged by imperialist powers will be an imperialist war, whatever the excuse put forward might be. Therefore, we must keep out of it and not allow Indian lives and Indian money to be sacrificed.

To the progressive forces of the world, to those who stand

for human freedom and the breaking of political and social bonds, we offer our full cooperation in their struggle against imperialism and fascist reaction, for we realise that our struggle is a common one. Our grievance is not against any people or any country as such, and we know that even in imperialist England, which throttles us, there are many who do not love imperialism and who stand for freedom.

During this period of difficulty and storm and stress, inevitably our minds and hearts turn to our great leader who has guided us and inspired us by his dynamic personality these many years. Physical ill-health prevents him now from taking his full share in public activities[8]. Our good wishes go out to him for his rapid and complete recovery, and with those wishes is the selfish desire to have him back again amongst us. We have differed from him in the past and we shall differ from him in the future about many things, and it is right that each one of us should act up to this convictions. But the bonds that hold us together are stronger and more vital than our differences, and the pledges we took together still ring in our ears. How many of us have that passionate desire for Indian independence and the raising of our poverty-stricken masses which consumes him ? Many things he taught us—long years ago it seems now—fearlessness and discipline, and the will to sacrifice ourselves for the larger cause That lesson may have grown dim but we have not forgotten it, nor can we ever forget him who has made us what we are and raised India again from the depths The pledge of independence that we took together still remains to be redeemed, and we wait again for him to guide us with his wise counsel.

But no leader, however great he be, can shoulder the burden single-handed; we must all share it to best of our ability and not seek helplessly to rely on others to perform miracles. Leaders come and go; many of our best-loved captains and comrades have left us all too soon, but India goes on and so does India's struggle for freedom. It may be that many of us must suffer

8. Mahatma Gandhi was present at the Congress session, but he did not participate in the delibrations.

still and die so that India may live and be free. The promised land may yet be far from us and we may have to march wearily through the deserts, but who will take away from us that deathless hope which has survived the scaffold and immeasurable suffering and sarrow; who will dare to crush the spirit of India which has found rebirth again and again after so many cruciflxions ?